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No. 360

## UNCOUNTED BLESSINGS.

BY EREN E. HENFORD.

I sometimes tire of making vain endeavor,  
For things I never win, though sought so long,  
And wonder if my plans must fail forever,  
And minor chords creep into life's low song,  
Until my heart is heavy with its sorrow,  
As things beyond me, always far away,  
Keep beckoning on, and whispering— "To-mor-  
row!"  
But never hold the music of "To-day!"

The things just out of reach seem always fairer  
Than any things to-day can have and hold.  
To-morrow's sunshine will be brighter, rarer—  
And so we miss the present hour's gold.  
To-day we lose in dreams of the to-morrow,  
And when to-morrow comes, the heart will lay  
Plans for the future, thinking of in sorrow  
The squandered blessings of the yesterday.

We lose the little joys of life forever  
In thinking of the far-off unattained,  
And by and by, when fainting hope says "Never,"  
For what we've missed, life's long regret is gain-  
ed.

If we could take life's blessings as we find them,  
Making the most of bright or cloudy days,  
Departing, they would leave content behind them,  
And vague unrest be banished from our ways.

## Winning Ways:

OR,  
KITTY ATHERTON'S HEART.

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

### CHAPTER IV.

BETWEEN TWO HEARTS.

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine."

"Nor would I break for your sweet sake,  
A heart that dotes on truer charms;  
A simple maiden in her flower,  
Is worth a hundred coats of arms."

—TENNYSON.

THE letter which was to bring Mr. Oliver "to his senses" was duly written that night, and sent to the "Bell Inn" the next morning by the trusty hand of the hostler at Stoney Cross. Mr. Oliver was still asleep. The chambermaid dared not knock at his door until she was summoned by him, so the man returned without an answer. Miss Marchmont sat in her breakfast-parlor awaiting him. When he had told his tale, her face darkened over like a wintry sky. "Tell them to get me a carriage, quick!" she exclaimed. "I wish to get away within ten minutes. Don't stand staring there, but hurry the horses, and tell them to make out the bill."

The man obeyed with a stupid gaze of wonder. Miss Marchmont's silk dress rustled stormily as she ran up to her chamber, and with her own hands gathered together her "belongings," and crammed them into the small trunk she had brought with her. Generally speaking, she was a most orderly person; tidiness with her was nearly a disease, and the high-backed chairs, the drawers, or a toilet-table, whose appointments were not laid down by plummet and rule, almost made her ill. But now she scarcely seemed to know or care what she was doing. Her riding-habit, spurs, boots, and whip were crammed into the box beside black moire antiquities, lutestrings, and velvet jackets; the diamond studs she sometimes wore found a place in her box of pens; her Maltese lace collars and chemisettes were rolled up like a bundle of rags, and stuffed into a vacant corner, and she herself seemed perfectly unconscious all the while of the wild confusion she was creating. Robson, down the lid of the trunk, she looked it, and rung for a servant to carry it away; then, putting on her hat and cloak, she snatched up her gloves and returned to the parlor. In ten minutes more she had settled the bill, bidden her landlady good-by, and was rushing away toward Lyndhurst Station as fast as the pony-chaise could carry her. What could she have expected, what had she failed to find, that she was thrown into such a fever of impatient excitement?

That morning she had made a fool of herself. She had written, according to promise, to Mr. Oliver, mentioning her adventure with "County Guy," and begging him, if his own heart was not engaged in the pursuit of the rustic beauty, to relinquish it in the young farmer's favor. It was an awkward task for her to undertake, and she had made the matter worse by an omission to herself, which she fancied it must be impossible for him to mistake. What madness dictated the words she could not tell—but they had been written and would be read—and they amounted to no less than a tacit confession of her preference for him. Had that message found him awake—had he translated it rightly, and believed in the truth of his own translation, how much suffering might have been spared them both!

As it was, her face burned with blushes during her rapid ride, although she was alone. She had forfeited her own self-respect, and that was bitter—she had richly earned the contempt, and that was more bitter still. Restless, irritable, wild with the pangs of wounded love and wounded pride, she chafed over her mistake like a caged lioness, and scarcely drew a free breath till she was safe that night in her London home. There, with the letters that arrived during her absence, the housekeeper's report, and the proofs of her book, which was just passing through the press, she managed to forget for a time what she had done.

The letter which had disturbed her so deeply was given to Mr. Oliver at the breakfast-table, by the rosy-cheeked servant who waited on him. He was busy with the morning paper when she laid it down, and not till he had glanced through all the columns, and duly digested the leading articles, did he break its seal.

A vivid color suffused his face as he saw the firm, clear writing, and the signature upon the last page. He read the first words with an impatient paw! Actually smiled over the description of William Hill's troubles, and murmured to himself that it was a bit of Miss Marchmont's "pathetic line of business," but came at last upon a passage that made him pause and look more serious:



Kitty's little hands bathing his throbbing temples—Kitty's dark eyes fixed upon him with such watchful love.

"You have many acquaintances in London who are certainly able to interest and amuse you, if you cannot interest and amuse yourself; you have, in me, an earnest and sincere friend, whose home is always open to receive you, whose heart is always ready to give you sympathy and kindness, if you claim it. Our pursuits, our interests, and our tastes are the same—we have, I hope, the same professional end in view—we can help each other, counsel each other, guide each other, do each other good. Can you not, then, for the sake of such a friendship, renounce a fleeting fancy—go back to your pleasant author life, and make this poor man happy in the home and in the way he is longing for?"

There was little else in the letter to attract his attention; he hurried it through, and then returned to those sentences which might mean so much or so little—those sentences which poor Olive, driving through the Forest at that moment on her way to town, would have given worlds never to have written.

"A friend whose home is always open to me, whose heart is always ready to give me sympathy and kindness," he mused. "Why, a wife could do no more! 'If I claim it!' Is that a challenge—a hint—a mental beckoning with her fairy hand, I wonder! It would not be a bad thing for me. She has a fortune, a house in town, good horses, she gives capital dinners, and she is sure to meet in her rooms all the celebrities of the day. She is a clever authoress, and will be a famous one yet; and I think she cares for me! On the other hand, to counterbalance all this, she is not pretty; her best friends could not tell her that! She is not graceful, she is not accomplished, she will dress herself eternally in black, and she has none of those little womanly ways and weaknesses which I admire; she is too independent, too capable of taking care of herself. Nothing of the vine about her; she will grow on her own ground, or—what all!"

He spread out her note before him, and smiled over it. "Look at that waste of ink and energy! She writes as if she were making a charge with cavalry. I wonder the pen does not go through the paper. How different from Kitty's little pet-hooks and hangers. Dear child—she spells 'affectionate' with one 'f' last night, and yet I could not find it in my heart to tell her of the blunder."

He glanced kindly at the little blue and gold edition of "Moore's Poems" which Kitty had given him at his urgent request, just before he had left her on the previous evening. He turned to the title-page and read again:

FRANCIS OLIVER, Esq.,  
With the affectionate regards  
of his little friend,  
KITTY ATHERTON.

Side by side they were lying—the girl's uncertain scrawl, the woman's firm, decided handwriting. And Mr. Oliver was looking first at one and then at the other, with a puzzled, undecided face that was good to see. "Like the famous ass between two bundles of hay!" he said at last, with a scornful smile; "I cannot tell which I love. Is it Kitty, with her sweet young face, and artless ways; or is it Miss Marchmont, the friend who is ready to give me sympathy and kindness when I claim it? She shall decide. I will go and ask her this very morning, before she returns to London; and if she accepts me, Kitty, my pretty Kitty, I must even give you back to William Hill!"

He rung the bell, and having made a careful toilet, mounted the young landlady's brown cab, which was always at his service, and rode away toward Stoney Cross. The broad highway was before him, but he chose to take the Forest Road, and passing by the cottage where Kitty was busy at work, lifted his hat to her, and bent almost to his saddle-bow as he galloped by. The silly little thing ran straightway up to the chamber, all blushing and trembling, and from the latticed window watched him till he was out of sight. The small simpleton actually thought that he had ridden by for the express purpose of seeing her; and a vision of a galloping steed, and a handsome, stately rider, filled her head all the morning, to the sad detriment

of the farmer's noonday meal. Alas! poor Kitty! you are, by no means, the first of your sex whom circumstances and a man have made an utter fool.

The brown cob galloped steadily on. Beside the Forest brook, its rider drew rein for a few moments, and sat lost in a reverie, with his eyes fixed upon the bank where Olive Marchmont had stood on the previous afternoon. The old strange sense of loss and bereavement came over him, and he felt that he was right, as he rode on toward her temporary home, to ask the question which should forever unite or forever separate their two destinies.

Ah! how comically sad, how ludicrously pathetic are these crosses in life! Here was the knight, ready and eager to make his vows at the lady's shrine; and the lady herself, frightened and ashamed, and repentant at the unsought encouragement she had already given, was flying the country at the rate of twenty miles an hour, little dreaming that the words she would have given her ears to hear, were trembling on the tip of her lover's tongue. I could find it in my heart to laugh at Mr. Oliver, as he sits there, mute and grave, listening to the bar-maid's story of "how the lady flew up-stairs all of a sudden, packed up her things her own self, and was off in a jiffy, leaving them all in a confusion, like."

"That will do, thank you," said Mr. Oliver, at last; and putting a piece of silver in her hand, he rode away again. Where? He scarcely knew or cared at that moment; but the brown cob, like a wise beastie, struck into the road that led toward home.

### CHAPTER V.

A SAD, BRAVE GOOD-BYE.

"Take this kiss upon the brow!  
And in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow:  
You are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream;  
Yet if days have flown away,  
In a night, or in a day,  
In vision, or in none,  
Is it, therefore, the less gone?  
All that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream."

—EDGAR A. POE.

"DUPED—foiled—laughed at once again!" was Mr. Oliver's mental comment on the tale he had heard at Stoney Cross. "It was a trap, of course, set for me by Miss Marchmont—a trap I had left her on the previous evening. He turned to the title-page and read again: 'FRANCIS OLIVER, Esq., With the affectionate regards of his little friend, KITTY ATHERTON.' Side by side they were lying—the girl's uncertain scrawl, the woman's firm, decided handwriting. And Mr. Oliver was looking first at one and then at the other, with a puzzled, undecided face that was good to see. 'Like the famous ass between two bundles of hay!' he said at last, with a scornful smile; 'I cannot tell which I love. Is it Kitty, with her sweet young face, and artless ways; or is it Miss Marchmont, the friend who is ready to give me sympathy and kindness when I claim it? She shall decide. I will go and ask her this very morning, before she returns to London; and if she accepts me, Kitty, my pretty Kitty, I must even give you back to William Hill!' He rung the bell, and having made a careful toilet, mounted the young landlady's brown cab, which was always at his service, and rode away toward Stoney Cross. The broad highway was before him, but he chose to take the Forest Road, and passing by the cottage where Kitty was busy at work, lifted his hat to her, and bent almost to his saddle-bow as he galloped by. The silly little thing ran straightway up to the chamber, all blushing and trembling, and from the latticed window watched him till he was out of sight. The small simpleton actually thought that he had ridden by for the express purpose of seeing her; and a vision of a galloping steed, and a handsome, stately rider, filled her head all the morning, to the sad detriment

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balm upon his wounded pride—his aching heart.

"Kitty," he said, "may I come in for a little while? I feel tired, and lonely, and ill." The bright face softened. "Oh, yes—if you please. Aunt Sarah is here; but you won't mind her?"

"Not at all. Can we send the horse back to the inn?"

"Father will take it when he goes to his work. Pray, come in, sir."

He observed Mrs. Brown greeted him warmly—so did the old farmer. His horse was led away, and he himself was established near the window, in the arm-chair, with a pillow smoothed by Kitty's hands behind his aching head. Now and then he closed his eyes, and the little forest brook, and the tall figure of Miss Marchmont, rose before him. He opened them, and lo! the little garden outside, with its late blooming flowers, and small holly tree; and, within, the cheerful fire, the tidy room, the anxious, kindly faces—all for him. Kitty's soft voice in his ear—Kitty's little hands bathing his throbbing temples—Kitty's dark eyes fixed upon him with such watchful love. Ah! Miss Marchmont! are you already forgotten! and was the wound you gave a mere pin-prick to vanity, not a deadly stab at the beating heart?

It would seem so; for the afternoon passed away, and yet he made no attempt to go. He shared their evening meal, and sat talking with the old man afterward, as quietly as if he had been one of the usual family-circle. Kitty listened, speaking seldom, but looking very happy. But when Mrs. Brown went away to her own home, and Mr. Oliver drew his chair a little nearer to Kitty's, and began to talk to her, another visitor made his appearance, who startled them both unaccountably. Why? It was only William Hill, and Mr. Oliver was asking a simple question about the sewing of a seam—nothing more—nothing that need have made them both blush so furiously.

They did blush, however, and William Hill saw it distinctly. The young men greeted each other coldly. Some wild idea of out-staying the new-comer seemed for a time to possess Mr. Oliver's mind, but he thought better of it at last, and took up his hat to go. The farmer accompanied him to the gate, and as he stood watching outside for a few moments after the old man had said good-night, he had the felicity of seeing two shadows on the white blind—two shadows, and so very close together! A sharp pang of jealousy came and went—then he laughed bitterly at his own folly.

"She is as good as his wife—what right have I to come between them? I will go back to London to-morrow," he said to himself, and pulling his hat over his eyes, he set off at a rapid pace for the inn.

The group he left behind did little to entertain each other. The farmer smoked his pipe, Kitty sewed, and William turned over the leaves of the book that lay on the table by her side. It was a newly-published novel, and he glanced at a sentence here and there, scarcely understanding what the words could mean, till turning to the title-page, he dropped the volume as if it had burned his fingers. Kitty sewed more industriously than ever, without looking up. No need for her to glance at that now-familiar name, "Francis Oliver." Was not every letter, every graceful curve and flourish the wayward pen had made in inscribing it, stamped upon her brain—nay, upon her heart itself?

At that moment the clock struck nine, and the farmer knocked the ashes from his pipe, and bade the lovers good-night. William sat in silence till he heard the chamber door close behind him, then laid his hand upon Kitty's sewing. She looked up, and let him take it away without a word. She saw in his eyes that he dreaded time for explanation had come.

"Sit here by me," he said, drawing the farmer's chair close beside his own.

She obeyed, and, leaning back, covered her eyes with her hand. She felt so guilty at that

moment that she could have sunk into the very depths of the earth only to be out of William's sight. If for a moment he had cherished any secret hope that he might have been mistaken in his thoughts about Kitty and the author, I think it must have vanished then and there, as he looked upon that hidden face, that shrinking, trembling form. It was some time before he spoke again; but when he did so, his voice was very kind.

"Kitty, dear, don't be frightened. I am not going to scold or blame you. I only want to talk to you seriously for a few moments, if you will let me. May I?"

"Yes," sighed Kitty.

"Take away your hands, then—let me look at you. What can you be afraid of, my love? Don't you know I would rather die this moment than give you pain?"

"Oh, that is it—that is it!" cried Kitty in a choked voice. "You are so kind—too kind—and I—I am a wretch!"

It was a tacit confession of her inconstancy—he felt it so, and from that moment neither attempted to hide or disguise it any more.

"No; don't say that, love. You are my own good little Kitty now, as you have ever been. But you have made a mistake about me, have you not? You thought you loved me when—you promised to be my wife—The brave fellow's voice faltered a little, and he could not go on.

But Kitty, forgetting him for a moment, and only eager to excuse her own apparently-inexcusable conduct, started up, took his passive hand, and cried out, blushing: "Oh, indeed I did, William, or I never would have promised. I always thought I loved you—till—"

"Till Mr. Oliver came!" he said, finishing the sentence for her.

She hung her head, and touched his hand humbly with her lips.

"Oh, William, forgive me. I could not help it, though I tried. He was so clever—so good—so different from any one I had ever seen before."

"He was—and he is!" replied the young man, with bitter emphasis. "And he is handsome and rich into the bargain. He can give you a splendid home and a name that every one knows. I have nothing to offer you but a poor cottage, these strong hands, this honest heart! Kitty—I don't blame you for choosing him instead of me."

"Oh, how you wrong me!" she exclaimed, with sudden energy. "It is not the home and the name I care for; it is himself! At first, it was his writings that I admired; but now, if he were a beggar in rags, I would go with him, if he asked me, work, beg, and die with him, if need be, because he is so dear—so dear to me, that I cannot find words to say what I feel!"

She stopped short, for William turned so pale that she could not but remember where she was, and to whom and of whom she was speaking.

"You say this to me!" he murmured—to me! And I was to have been your husband in three months more. Oh, Kitty, it is hard!"

She could not but be moved by the sight of his sufferings.

"Forgive me," she said, gently. "I ought not to have said it; but the words came, and I could not stop them."

"No doubt—no doubt. Never mind me, Kitty, I can bear it. And I may as well know the worst. When a man has got his death-blow, a stab or two, more or less, makes little difference to him. Now, tell me all. Talk to me as if I was your own brother. Has this man asked you to marry him?"

"No."

"He has some honor then about him. He knew you were engaged to me, and he has respected us both so far, for which I thank him. But when he knows that you are free, as he will know to-morrow, Kitty, he will ask you to marry him. If I was not sure of that, I would not let you go. What answer shall you give?"

Was there any need to ask that question! One look at her downcast eyes should have been enough. Nay, it was enough, and he went on with a patient sigh, that never reached her ear.

"I would not say one word, Kitty, to make you unhappy; but I do think that when he asks you that question, you ought to ask him another: about that lady from London who was here the other day. Do you remember?"

Kitty colored brightly. Had she not wasted many an hour since that sunny afternoon, in vain conjectures about the stranger, who, although she was not gifted with beauty or grace, had yet managed to take Mr. Oliver from her, and make him utterly oblivious of her presence, for a full quarter of an hour! That lady who had known him before she herself had, but of whom he said so little—that lady who stood suddenly beside the Forest brook, as if she had dropped from the clouds, and who looked at her with so much meaning in her eyes! And William could ask if she remembered her!

"What of her? What do you know of her? What is she to Mr. Oliver? What is Mr. Oliver to her?" she cried out, eagerly.

"Those are questions which Mr. Oliver must answer," was the grave reply. "I know nothing more of the lady than this, that she was good and kind to me, when I needed goodness and kindness most, and that it struck me then, through all my trouble, that she was fond of Mr. Oliver. I don't know if I was mistaken or not. People ought not to marry without the fullest mutual understanding on such points as these."

Kitty sighed, and said she thought so, too; but all the while her heart was very sore at the thought that Miss Marchmont, or Miss Anybody else, could ever, at any period of her former life, have been more to Francis Oliver than she was now. If he could have come to her as she came to him, loving for the first time, with pure lips and a fresh heart, how much dearer he would have been! She did not put that feeling into words. She might have denied its existence if any one else had done so, but it was there all the same.

William, who had been watching her changing face for some time in silence, now rose to go.

"It is getting late, Kitty; the clock will soon strike ten. I have much to do before I sleep. I am going away to-morrow."

"Going? Where?"

"To London."

"So suddenly. And because of this—because of me?"

"Even so, Kitty. Do you quite understand



what this visit means? Do you see that I am leaving you to-night, as from now it is possible for a woman to be? Do you know that I shall never look upon your face again for many a year—never see you, perhaps, till you have your children at my feet? It is true, Kitty; and I feel that I do feel, do you see, that I could feel that I love you so well, that I am in the way of your happiness, I can stand aside and let mine go; but it must be away from here—away from the old home—away from you. And so I am going to meet my father's brother in London, and he will send me abroad to America. He has land there that ought to be looked after. I am fit to do that, if nothing more. So God bless you, my dear, and make you happy in your own way. You will think, sometimes, of your old playfellow, won't you, Kitty—of the poor fellow who loved you—"

He broke down at last, and leaning his head upon her shoulder, cried like a child. Her tender little heart could not bear it. She said between her own sobs, that he should not go; and that she would try to love him once again, and be a good wife to him if he would but take her back. That promise roused him—made a man of him once more!

"You are an angel—a tender, pitying angel," he said, as he took both her hands in his, and looked down into her pale little face. "I shall take the memory of your kindness with me wherever I may go, but you shall not give up your own heart's desire for me. No, Kitty, marry him, if he is so dear, and may his wish after you come true—a long life, a happy home, and some one there to love you always. Now, God bless you, my dear; you will let me kiss you for the last time. Good-by, Kitty. Good-by!"

He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and was gone. She thought she heard him sob as he closed the door. She herself sat down and cried as if her heart would break. The fire died out—the candle flickered and burned low—she shivered all over when she went upstairs to bed. Poor little Kitty! It was the first time she had ever grieved or pained any one in her short life, and to grieve William was the worst of all. Her earliest playmate, her kindest friend, the child's sweetheart, the girl's protector, the maiden's lover, it was unpardonable! She went herself to sleep with the bitterest tears those sweet dark eyes had ever known.

#### CHAPTER VI. A GIRL'S ILLUSION.

"I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand.  
How few! Yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep—while I weep!  
Oh, God! can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp?  
Oh, God! can I not save  
One from the pitiless wave?  
Is all well with my soul?  
But a dream within a dream!"

—EDGAR A. POE.

At three o'clock the next morning, William Hill came out of his own little cottage, and closing the door carefully behind him, in order that he might not disturb his still sleeping housekeeper, set off down the road in the direction of Kitty's home. His preparations for the journey had all been made, his luggage was to follow him to London, and he himself was to walk over to Lyndhurst to breakfast and catch the express train. He had said good-by to his housekeeper, the favorite hound, and nut-brown horse, before he slept. There remained but one last farewell, and then he was free!

The church clock struck the half-hour, as he came in sight of Kitty's home, and the yellow moon, her light falling with the softest beams (it seemed to him) around the hallowed spot where his love was sleeping. He paused beside the old wooden stile, where Kitty had so often lingered on summer evenings, long gone by, to listen to his loving sketches of their future home; he leaned against her favorite seat and looked up at her latticed window with a bitter groan. His simple soul was bewildered by the blow that had fallen so suddenly—his love, his loving heart could scarcely comprehend how such a thing could be. The most beautiful, the most intellectual woman on earth could never have tempted him from his allegiance. Venus and Minerva together would have been eclipsed, in his eyes, by little Kitty. How differently she must have felt for him all the while, since the first word, the first look of this hated stranger had drawn her heart away!

Poor William! It was indeed a bitter draught to drink. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave, and when it is well founded—when your rival is handsome, clever, richer, and more agreeable than you—when, compared with him or her, you are mentally, morally, and physically a dwarf, a pigmy—it does not by any means take from the weight of your hurt the least capacity for bearing it. The feeling has its rise only in selfishness and wounded pride—we all know that; but while selfishness and pride are born with us, and remain with us till we die, I do not see how we are to escape these pangs, except by loving no one but ourselves. Of olden times, who came as near perfection as poor human nature can ever hope to come, may have laid aside their self-will and self-love so entirely as positively to rejoice in slights and humiliations; but I question much, if, in the nineteenth century, any heart can be found that (however much all outward manifestations of feeling may be hidden) will, in a case like this, draw back with honest meekness, and own that another is worthier of the prize. Conscious, it may be, of that other's worth, and its own imperfections all the while, yet inwardly pained and wronged, and deeply resentful when the beloved object grows conscious, too! Ah, no; whatever we may be to the world and to ourselves, we all want to be first and foremost the estimation of the one! We all echo Montrose's egotistical song,

"As Alexander I will reign,  
And I will reign alone,  
My thoughts did evermore disdain  
A rival on the throne."

It is selfish, it is wrong, it is laughable, perhaps, but also it is very natural. Just one little kingdom—one little world, where we may reign, and "bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne." This is the common desire and the common right of every son and daughter of Adam. But people do not always find their desires granted, or their rights maintained in this world, as we learn to our cost. When we find that the kingdom has revolted or been stolen treacherously away—when we see the "conquering hero" marching in with banners flying, drums beating, trumpets sounding, to take possession of his loyal province, while we, who once owned, or thought we owned it, are fain to creep through the victorious procession, and hide ourselves in shame and grief beyond its walls—is it strange, after all, that the tumult of our thoughts points rather to angry revenge than to meek submission?

I think not, and remembering certain pangs which I myself underwent in my younger and more imprudent days, I feel inclined to sympathize with this poor young farmer, when, understanding but vaguely yet resenting keenly those qualities in his rival which had won Kitty's heart, all his pain, and agony, and fever of wounded love and pride culminated in unmitigated wrath against Francis Oliver, the man who, with so many gifts, so many blessings, so many to love him, had come there to steal the one little ewe-lamb, the poor man's sole possession. In no spirit of proximity did he make the comparison. He had never read that passage without an involuntary thought of her, and now she was forever lost to him. He could not hate her, he could not wish harm to her; but woe to the man who had crossed his path, if by any chance they met! And then, glancing once more toward the modest little chamber, he laid his head upon the stile, and burst into tears.

So it went on—the old story—the old grief, which every one knows by experience, better than words can tell it! First tears, then anger,

then wild reproaches, then tears again—frantic and useless strivings against what was, and what was to be, while the "still moon looked calmly on his pain!" The clock struck four. He turned for a moment before he left the stile to gaze over the fair expanse of country on which the moon smiled down. He never saw it again, save in some passing day-dream, but every little hill and undulating valley, every tree, and brook, and flower, and, most of all, that rustic cottage with its latticed windows and vine-wreathed porch, was stamped ineffaceably on his brain. And many a time, years afterward, in his Western home, that quiet moonlight shone, and the English village and the church upon the hill rose up vividly before him, and he sickened at the memory, and prayed in vain for rest and peace from its haunting presence. For his was one of those unfortunate natures that can never forget—one of those unfortunate hearts that can never change!

A week later he sailed for America. And little Kitty, without knowing it, had lost the kindest, bravest, and truest heart that ever beat or broke for her sweet sake.

Did Kitty care?

I scarcely know how to answer the question. Women's hearts are not always as hard as nether millstones, and it was impossible that she should not feel some regret for the pain she had inflicted on one whose worst fault was loving her too well. But after the first bitter tears had been shed, and the first feeling of loneliness overcome, I am afraid that her spirit danced joyously in the sunlight of liberty—that her whole nature thrilled with ecstasy to know that she was free! It seemed cruel and wicked to rise the morning after that sad parting, with such a spring of life and happiness within her breast—it seemed unkind to rejoice in the beauty of the opening day, the singing of the birds, the familiar village sounds, when poor William was so many miles away; yet she could not help it, and the farmer, coming home to breakfast, found her "liling" merrily as she made the tea, about the lassie who "ca'd the yowes to the knowes" in company with her shepherd swain.

The old man sat down to his simple meal with a roughish smile.

"You seem very happy, Kitty," he remarked.

"I thought how it would be when I heard William go away so late last night. Have you said your last words as lovers, and are you free for next week's wedding?"

"Yes, I have turned canary after such a fashion!"

Kitty turned red and white as he looked at her, and then the truth came out.

"Father, we have our last words as lovers; that is very true. But we have not named another day, and William has gone."

"Gone?" said the farmer, draining his cup, and helping himself to another slice of bread and butter. "Give me some more tea, child. Where has he gone to?"

"To America!"

"What?"

His sudden start frightened her so that she dropped the teapot, and scalded her hand terribly.

"Now see what you have done, you silly little puss. It serves you right for trying to play tricks on your poor old father. Does it smart badly? Run and get some cotton-wool, and wrap it up. I can make the tea myself."

"Oh! but, father, I don't mind the hand, father. I deserve to be scalded worse than that! I am a wicked, ungrateful girl, and when you hear all, I do believe you will turn me out of the house!"

"Bless me, child! what are you talking about! One would think you had gone mad!" he exclaimed, pushing back his chair, and looking intently at her. For the first time he noticed her paleness, her restless air, her tear-stained eyes, and a suspicion of the truth seemed to flash over his mind as he gazed.

"Heyday, Miss!" he exclaimed, sharply. "What is all this about? You have been doing something wrong. What is it? Out with it!"

Never before had he spoken to her in such a tone, and the poor child was frightened half out of her wits, and could only gasp piteously:

"William! Don't be angry, father! Don't scold me!"

"William! what has he to do with it? Now, don't tell me you have been giving him a heartache, or I shall be tempted to box your ears. Have you quarreled?"

"Worse than that, father!" she said, desperately, bursting into tears as she spoke.

"Worse?"

The old man turned pale.

"Kitty, you didn't—you couldn't mean that he has really gone?"

"To America! Oh, dear! Yes, father!"

"And you have driven him away, Miss? Oh, I see it all now! Give me my hat and stick."

"What are you going to do, father? William is many a mile away by this time."

"More shame to you, that you have to tell me so! I'm not going after William. Poor fellow! I love him like my own son, but he is far too good for a girl like this little thing like you, and I hope he will marry out in America, and never think of you again. No, I won't ask him to come back to a girl who has used him so; but I'll do something else." And he put on his hat, grasped his stick, and whistled to his dog in a very significant way.

"Father! Oh, father! where are you going?"

cried Kitty, getting between him and the door, in an agony of fear.

"I am going to see the man who has made all this mischief. Yes, you may well blush and hang down your head. You know, as well as I, that you were willing enough to marry William till this popinjay of a London writer came down here and turned your foolish brain. A coxcomb, who will not let this girl of his, after he got back among his own towns, and yet you have gone and broken a good man's heart for his sake! However, I'll have none of his philandering here. Now that he has gained his end, he shall just take himself back to the city again, or I will know the reason of his staying. Open the door."

"Father dear, what will Mr. Oliver think, if you go to him like this?"

"I don't care what he thinks."

"Oh, yes, you do—you care what he thinks of your poor little Kitty! If you go to him on such an errand, he will say to himself that you are trying to frighten him into marrying me. You know he will. And then he will despise me, and I shall die."

"Nonsense, child! I tell you I won't have him come here any more to fill your head with nonsense. If I had not been as blind as an old beetle, I should have seen it all from the first. Yet who on earth could have expected a young woman, with a sweetheart of her own, to go and fall in love with a perfect stranger, in a week's time! I'm ashamed of you, Kitty; that is a fact."

"I know I have done wrong, very wrong; but, oh! father, don't go home like this! I don't bear that! I think you would really kill me—indeed I feel as if I was dying now!"

As she spoke, she turned very pale; her eyes closed, and she would have fallen to the ground if he had not caught her in his arms. Overwhelmed with contrition for his harshness, he placed her in a chair, and held a glass of water to her lips, promising all and everything she asked, if she would but look at him—smile on him once again.

Kitty heard the frantic words as she recovered from that deathlike swoon; took the advantage which her illness gave her, and never let it go.

"I am better now," she said, putting the water away. "You spoke so loud and looked so angry, that made me faint. But you have promised, father—remember!—that you will not leave me. I will remember. Are you sure you are better?"

"Quite sure. And you will not say anything to Mr. Oliver, even if he happens to come here?"

"No—at least—Kitty, you must promise me that you will not let this man make love to you."

"He never does, father."

And the color came stealing back into her cheek again, like the tint of a young moss-rose.

"And you must only see him when your aunt is with you."

"Very well, father."

There was a short silence. The old man looked perplexed and puzzled.

"Child, I wish your mother had lived," he said, at last, laying his hand fondly on her dark hair. "You are growing very like her, you are far too pretty to be left alone, and I do not know how to guide you as she would. Remember your mother, and your mother's God, my dear; that is the best advice I can give you. And don't break my heart, Kitty, in my old age, don't let me have to meet her in heaven, and tell her that her only child—her darling child—has done anything wrong!"

His voice trembled, his eyes were filled with tears, and he snatched up his hat, and left the house without another word. Kitty sat watching him as he went down the narrow garden path; and then her thoughts turned, with fond relief, toward the beloved one, who, through her intercession, was safe from all blame and rebuke. What did it matter how much she might have to bear, so he was so well and so happy? What were all her angry words and bitter reproaches, so they did not fall upon his ear?

She went about her daily work, no longer singing, it is true, but with a heart that was once more at ease. The momentary strain of suspense was over; the worst was known and what was more—forgotten! She was free to act for herself—free to be happy, if she could, and in her own way. And even Aunt Betsy, coming in later in the day, with words of wondering condolence, and the news of William Hill's departure, found herself checked and silenced, she scarcely knew how, by something in Kitty's face, and voice, and manner, that she had never seen before.

The news traveled fast, as news of that description always must; and long before night-fall, every one was aware that the lovers had quarreled and parted, and that "the gentleman from London" was at the bottom of it all. "The gentleman" heard it also, by chance, from a lounge in the tap-room, and he went out, and he strolled out through the little side gate and into the Forest Road. She walked there for an hour, as the sun was going down; her face growing sadder, her eyes more wistful in her glances as every moment flitted by. She had half-fancied she should come upon Mr. Oliver walking or riding in his favorite haunts. The poor child had so much to say to him!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 359.)

#### ADRIET.

BY FRANK M. EMERIE.

I stood on the shore, so lonely,  
Close to the headland gray;  
When day like an infant goddess  
In the lap of the morning lay:  
White clouds, like a mother's arms,  
The barges of Thought set sail,  
With never a ripple of surface—  
With never the least sea-gale.

I watched fair argosies coming  
From some enchanted island;  
Some in the Ocean fastness  
Where suns forever smile.  
They held a priceless cargo,  
But not one gem for me;  
And my heart goes drifting, drifting,  
Drifting o'er the sea.

I stumble amidst the jewels  
Strewn thick by my feet around;  
I search among the vessels  
For my ever-outward-bound;  
I see them turning shoreward  
With shining phantoms;  
But where is my dear home-come?  
Where is my promised gold?

I've placed on my breast one jewel—  
Crown-jewel, I know full well—  
Yet while I sit, the chains me,  
I hear a dank sea-bell.  
Come booming over the waters:  
"There are rare pearls for thee!"  
So, with hands weighed down with jewels,  
My heart goes o'er the sea.

Hark! 'tis the rush of breakers!  
The shout of the Argonauts!  
Laden, the hands of others!  
For me, but a moaning "Naught!"  
And my cry goes out, "Oh, sailors,  
Didst see on some far lone shore  
The neck of a hoped-for vessel  
Gone from me ever more?"

But they flout in their lightened beauty,  
Leaving me far away,  
With naught but the murmur of waters,  
Nought but the headland gray;  
Only a shadowy gleaming  
Shaping a phantom bliss;  
Only the haunting question—  
"Why do I wait for this?"

Why are those proffered treasures  
So lightly prized by me?  
Why does my heart go drifting  
Over a silent sea?  
Sometimes the "why" will be answered,  
In God's own time and way;  
Sometimes, on this night of wonder,  
Will shine a mental day.

#### Nobody's Boy:

#### OR, THE STOLEN CHILD.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

#### CHAPTER XV. WESTWARD, HO!

It was no light task which Pete had laid out for himself. He had no clear idea, it is true, of the magnitude of this task, but if he had known the route to traverse with dangers it would not have deterred him.

To his adventurous spirit the prospect of a journey across the plains to California was full of promise. He had some indefinite vision of oceans of buffaloes, and throngs of wild Indians, of sterile deserts and lofty mountains in the way. But to Pete these were all of promise. He was too young and too bold by nature to consider peril before he saw it.

Besides, Minnie was crossing these plains and climbing these mountains; Minnie was in danger not only from red-men, but from white savages. The boy, from "hating gals," had grown to worship this one charming little girl. Where peril threatened her there duty commanded him to be.

His last glance at William Denton had filled his mind with a new thought. Something in the attitude of the man, some warning impression perhaps, had reminded Pete of the man he had seen talking to Colonel Green.

It was a passing impression; gone almost instantly, but the boy could not get it from his mind.

A vague sense of danger to his young tutor haunted him; and a new-born sense of duty impelled him to fly to her rescue.

"There's a screw loose somewhere," I'll sell my hat if there ain't," said Pete, to the gun man who was acting as custodian of his funds.

"Dunno what made the gal's father want her in California in such a hurry, anyhow."

"It was very natural, my lad," said his guardian; "after the danger she had escaped he naturally feared to leave her out of his own care."

"S'pose it was somehow that way," said

Pete. "But if he ain't got her in a wuss scrape, then I'll cave."

"It is a dangerous journey, crossing the plains, no doubt," said the gentleman, not arriving at his meaning. "But they will be over before the snows come, and the Indians are quiet now."

"There's wuss than that," said Pete, mysteriously. "Ain't no use blowin' 'bout what it is, but I'm goin' to make a clean streak after that gal. Come to strike you for a little dough to help me out."

"A little what?" asked the gentleman, in surprise.

"A few dingbats."

"What are they?"

"A trifle of the needful."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I'm blowed if I 'spected that you didn't know English better nor me," said Pete, without a particle of reverence or respect for his guardian. "Can't travel on tick, you know. Want you to set me up in the necessary."

"Is it money you want?"

"Reckon I've been sayin' so enough."

"See here, my boy," said the gentleman. "Your money is out on interest, and there will be nothing due for six months. I have already advanced you twenty-five dollars from my own pocket."

"Dunno nothing 'bout interest," said Pete. "I'm making tracks straight for Californy, and maybe you'll not see me for two year to come. Maybe never. I want a hundred and fifty, flat down, and I'm bound to have it, that's wuss. Reckon it's my five thousand. You kin keep the balance if I don't come fur it."

"It is out of my hands, Pete. All I can get is the interest, and that not till it is due. However, if you can show me the need of it, I may advance the sum you require."

"Maybe I've been a bit too fast," said Pete, through whose mind a sense of the gentleman's meaning began to creep. "Hope I ain't been impudent."

"A little hasty, Pete," said his guardian, smiling. "Let me hear your reasons for needing this money."

Pete, with some mental reservation, gave his objects with sufficient fullness to convince the gentleman that it was no mere boyish whim to spend money that possessed him. He finally agreed to advance him the money, with the proviso that he should assist him in making the necessary purchases.

To this Pete readily assented. He had, in fact, no definite idea of the requisites for a journey across the plains, except that he wanted a rifle and a revolver. His mind was filled with some indefinite notion of fighting his way across the plains, but he fancied that he was a better judge of "shooting-irons" himself, and was bound to select his own weapons.

A large delegation of his youthful friends gathered at the depot of the Chicago and Toledo railroad to see Pete off, and our hero, with his pioneer suit, his weapons of offense, his knapsack, and his general Kit Carsonish air, was the subject of boundless admiration.

Even Nicodemus, who kept close to his heels, found more admirers than he fancied, and showed his teeth, more than once, to the enthusiastic crowd.

A chorus of cheers rent the air as the train moved off, with our hero on board.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, Pete," shouted one of his old companions.

"You bet I will. If I don't show a good hand sell me out, that's all," was Pete's answer.

Pete had never journeyed more than four miles in the cars before, and this continuous rattling over hundreds of miles of prairie and for st, past numberless towns, and through great cities, was a new and astonishing experience to him.

Chicago and St. Louis astounded him. He felt Toledo—which he had always thought to be some guss of a city—sinking into insignificance in comparison.

But his chief wonder arose from the unnumbered miles of country that fled past the rapid wheels of the train. His lake voyage had widened the boy's ideas of the extent of the land of which he was a prospective citizen. But that was water only. Here was land, land, land. Forest, river, plain, mountain, village and city, rapidly succeeded each other. The hours reft by. Morning advanced to noon. Noon moved on to night. Through the long hours of darkness the rolling wheels kept up their incessant din.

Over north-western Ohio, across northern Indiana, down nearly the whole length of Illinois, over the great State of Missouri, for miles without end, as it seemed to the boy's wild imagination, the train rolled on.

At length they entered a small but bustling city, near the western boundary of Missouri, and the voyage by rail ended.

They were in Independence, at that time the western limit of railroad travel, though projects were already busy in men's minds which would carry the iron rail far to the west.

But as yet only the wagon train had dared to encounter the perils and interminable spread of the mighty Western plains, and the unknown dangers of the mountain chains beyond. Independence was the center of a bustling trade in emigrants' goods, its streets were cut by the broad wheels of toiling wagons, and rudely-dressed, daring adventurers could be seen in throngs on its avenues, day and night.

Emigration westward was increasing in extent yearly, almost daily. Wagon trains, supposed to be strong enough to defy Indian attacks, left the city weekly. Daily, trappers and hunters, disdaining the protection of numbers, struck off on foot or horse across the plains, or returned to the city, laden with the fruits of their enterprise.

Pete, despite the strangeness of his new experiences, did not lose his native self-possession. The uproar of the city streets, the strange scenes and rough language he encountered, were not able to confuse the boy's clear brain, and ere he had been an hour in this new city, he was as much at home as if he had been born and bred there.

He lost no time in making inquiries concerning the objects of his search. But people in this bustling locality seemed to have too much business of their own to know anything concerning others.

Several hours passed before he gained any trace of Minnie and her cousin.

At length the keeper of a general utility store answered his questions in the affirmative. "A pretty little girl, was it?" he asked. "A neat, blue-eyed creature, with long, yellow hair?"

"Just her photograph, for a bushel of beans?" cried Pete. "You've seed her, then?"

"There's many young ones pass here. I might easy be mistaken. There was such a child in my store the other day."

"Anybody with her?"

"Yes, a tall, good-looking fellow, dressed in gray pants and a brown coat."

"You didn't happen to hear no names, mister?"

"No."

"And would it be botherin' too much to ask when this was?"

"Three days ago."

"It's them, or I don't know a catty from a perch! Gone out yet?"

"Yes. They left that day, in Joe English's train. They are far ahead now, for Joe don't lose any time."

"I'm after them then, like lightning after a telegraph wire. Much obliged." And Pete was walking off.

"There's a train making up now," called the man after him, "if you are going to cross the plains. Only you're a young one to be making that trip without company."

"How soon will the train be a-goin'?"

"Day after to-morrow."

"Won't go for me, then. I'm after the train ahead. Only three days the start of me. Bet I pull that up afore a week. Good-by."

"Why, you risky young rascal, you don't mean to say that you're going to venture out alone?"

"If I ain't, there's no coons in Ohio."

"Come, come, boy, there's a weak spot in your brains. You'll be lost, or starved, or gobbled up by the Indians, long before you catch the train."

"Reckon not," said Pete, boldly. "Can't miss the wagon trail, and got a week's provender in this here knapsack. What's more, I'm some on the trigger. The Indians best make their wills afore they run foul of me. I'm Picayune Pete, I am. I ain't no slouch."

Flinging his rifle over his shoulder, and whistling up Nicodemus, Pete set off with a long stride that would soon carry him beyond the limits of the town.

The man he had addressed looked after him with a surprised glance.

"Wouldn't wonder if the young brat pulled through all right," he muttered. "He's got the right spirit, and there's the flash of a born scout in his eye."

#### CHAPTER XVI. THE BOY PIONEER.

PETE, from his childhood, had been accustomed to the most vigorous exercise. Young as he yet was, his muscles were firm and wiry. The prospect of a long journey afoot was rather alluring to him than otherwise. No fear of physical weariness entered his young mind.

An hour's walk from the town brought him to the banks of a broad, majestic river. It was the Missouri, which here constituted the border between the civilized life of the old settled States, and the mighty wilderness beyond.

A ferry-boat soon placed him on the western side of this liquid border, and on the soil of the Territory of Kansas.

It had been late in the afternoon when he started from Independence, and night was now rapidly approaching. Pete obtained lodgings for himself and dog in a public house on the western shore of the river.

The next day dawned fresh and clear, a charming September morning. The sun had only



the unbroken prairie spread to the limits of the horizon, covered now with a magnificent wealth of flowers, the wide expanse of nature's rarest beauty only marred by the narrow line of the emigrant trail.

He got few lifts that day, but trudged on with unconquerable spirit.

This part of Kansas was well watered, and he crossed the valleys of several large and a number of small streams. At this season of the year they ran very low, some of the beds being nearly empty, and there was no difficulty in crossing.

Almost all the woodland of the country lay along these streams, fringes of elm and cottonwood marking their course for miles across the prairie.

Between the streams the wide plain, covered with its exquisite carpet, ran in long undulations, rising and falling like successive waves of a frozen sea.

A third day broke on Pete and Nicodemus still trudging westward. The dog had accommodated himself to the situation, though he still wore an injured expression.

Pete's determination was still unconquerable; but two days of incessant travel, with a heavy weight on his shoulders, had taken some of the vim out of him, and he walked on in silence.

Thus until near noon they passed through almost unbroken solitude, the ranches now being very few, while the single emigrant wagons had almost vanished.

They were nearing that point where travelers had to band together for protection from possible Indian raids. However peaceful appearing, the red-men of the plains were not to be trusted without a good show of force.

"Tell you what it is, Nicodemus," said Pete, at length; "dunno what you think about it, but it's my notion that this thing's about played. We kin make ten mile a day more than that mule-train, Nick, and that'll soon count. But I don't see no sort of use wearin' my legs out when there's plenty of hosses about. There weren't less than a hundred at that last ranch. Only got ten dollars left, dorg, and that won't buy a hoss, and I've been brung up too pious to steal one. But you kin say what you please, Nicodemus. I'm bound to have a hoss."

The dog barked and ran eagerly ahead, his nose in the air.

"Hallo! what's up, Nick?" cried Pete, looking eagerly forward.

As he did he saw two graceful animals which had been grazing on the prairie before him, take alarm and bound off at a wonderful pace.

Pete looked after them with astonished eyes. "They ain't buffaloes, that's certain," he said. "Nor they ain't prairie dogs. Wonder if they're them antelopes that fellow back there talked about."

The agile animals flew on like the wind, and soon disappeared behind the wooded border of a stream.

There were numerous birds flitting and singing about, and the boy's senses, in love with nature as he had always been, took in with delight these scenes of beauty.

But a new impulse was roused in him as the uneasy dog started up some larger birds, which flew with a heavy flight away from him.

With the instinct of the sportsman he brought the rifle to his shoulder, glanced along the sights, and pulled the trigger.

It was a quick and doubtful shot, as the birds were more than fifty yards distant, and flying rapidly.

But Pete, young as he was, had had long practice with the rifle. His quick, true eye had taken deadly aim. The bird fell with a dull thud to the ground.

The well-trained dog flew to pick up the game, while Pete, with his sportsman's habits, hastened to reload his rifle.

Nicodemus brought in a bird utterly unknown to Pete. It was a large, mottled bird, of the size of a chicken, with what seemed a pair of small, extra wings on its neck, and a slight crest on its head.

"Not a bad shot that," cried a voice near him, as he stood weighing the bird in his hand. Pete turned hastily, to see beside him a man on horseback, who had approached unobserved during his preoccupation.

He was a tall, muscular man, with heavily-bearded face. A long rifle lay across the saddle before him. His right hand held the bridle of a led horse.

"Wasn't a bad shot for a boy," he repeated, "to bring down a prairie hen, at that distance, on the wing."

"This is a prairie hen, is it?" asked Pete, holding up the bird.

"Sartinly. Don't know much about these diggin's, boy, or you wouldn't ask that. Where away! You're a young one to be out of sight of the settlements alone."

"I'm goin' to put myself further out of sight then," said Pete. "I'm bound for California."

"Where!" whistled the new-comer, with a gesture of surprise.

"I'm after a train that's forty or fifty mile ahead," said Pete.

"Spect to catch it afoot! The Injuns will gobble you up, sure as shooting, boy. Best turn tail and make a bee-line for the settlements. The red-skins are raising 'hunder ahead."

"I kin hit an Injun on the wing as well as a prairie chicken," said Pete, boldly. "I'm goin' ahead if there's ten war-parties on the trail. Why don't you turn back yourself?"

"Me!" and the man laughed as if highly amused. "Me turn back for Injuns? Why, boy, they're my reg'lar diet. I generally abolish a dozen of the rascals to get up my appetite for dinner. I'm Bill Grubb, the scout. Mought have heard of me."

"Can't say as I have," answered Pete. "I'm Picayune Pete. Maybe you mought have heered tell of me."

"You're a young hoss, Pete, I'll bet that," said the scout, laughing. "Good on the trigger, and got the right spirit in you. Goin' West myself, and wouldn't mind havin' you for company. What do you want with the train ahead?"

Pete, who had been greatly taken with the honest face and free manner of the scout, made no hesitation in relating his object.

"Cordin' to your story there's deviltry afoot," said the scout. "Now I'm death on deviltry. Got a spare hoss here, Pete, which I was goin' to leave at the next ranch. Hop up, my lively youngster. Kind of took a liking to you. Guess you and I will ride pards, for a day or two anyhow. That your dog?"

"I bet. He's some guns of a dorg, too. Ain't many such dorgs. Speak out for yourself, Nicodemus."

The dog barked loudly in response. He looked up at their new friend as if he felt that he might be trusted.

"He'll do," said the scout. "Let him trot after. Hop up."

Pete needed no second invitation. With the bound of a young athlete he was in an instant on the horse's back.

Grasping the reins, and laying his rifle and game before him, he was ready for the road.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## RED-SKINS AND RIFLES!

THE two new friends jogged on together with a friendliness that soon became intimacy. The scout was amused by the shrewdness and odd ways of the boy, and found himself liking him more and more with every mile of their journey.

Pete had been dreaming all his days of wild life in the West, and to find himself now the companion of a real scout, and bound to that western land where adventures and dangers are thick as blackberries, was an experience that made him unusually garrulous and jovial.

Even Nicodemus seemed to think it more respectable to follow a horse than a footman, and trotted on contentedly. His late adventure with the prairie hen may have given him self-satisfaction.

The scout's horses were good stock, and they made excellent time over the hard-trodden earth road which had been made by countless emigrant wagons.

As they went Pete's tongue ran on as rapidly. He was not long in acquainting Bill Grubb, his new friend, with the circumstances that had led to his present enterprise, including all the particulars of the abduction.

"What did you say the fellow's name is that's with her?" asked the scout.

"William Denton. He's a first cousin of hers."

"And the chap that ran away with her. What was his autograph?"

"He called hisself Kurnel Green. Dunno if that was his name."

"Colonel Green, eh? And a born devil out-and-out. I know him, Pete, like a breeze. And I don't owe him no good wishes, neither. He was in Independence last week."

"Ha!" cried Pete. "See him there?"

"Bet I did! Mought have had a little scrimmage with him too, only he slid somewhere. The rascal's got a dozen faces and twenty names. Wouldn't wonder if he were with the train now, under false colors."

"What for?" asked Pete, with a startled look.

"See here, my boy, I'm a man of the world, and know what stuff men are made of. I will give you a lesson in human nature. Suppose this young one was put out of the way, who'd be the next relation to her father?"

"William Denton, so far as I've heard," answered Pete.

"The old man's made mints of money, you say, and it's like he's worn himself out doing it. S'pose now his darter would drop off, and then he'd drop off. Wouldn't this fellow step in for the cash?"

"Reckon so," said Pete.

"Bound to, Pete," continued the scout. "You can bet high that's what the chap's working for. He's got the right help, too, in Colonel Green. The bound's a deeper devil than any Sioux or Cheyenne on the plains. Now see here: they made a desperate effort, and fell through."

"Picayune Pete and Nicodemus was around," muttered the boy.

"I'll go a buffalo that Colonel Green is with the train now. The two rascals have got their heads together. There ain't no Toledo round here. It's easy to lose a little gal, and there's only the red Injuns to pick her up, if she 'scapes the wolves."

"Dunno 'bout that," said the boy. "Picayune Pete and Nicodemus is around."

The man laughed at the combined conceit and earnestness in Pete's tone.

"Think a little chap like you can do anything ag'in two seasoned hounds like these?" he asked.

"I kin try," said Pete. "Hard tryin' ain't to be sneezed at. I kin hit a man's head at a hundred yards with a rifle. A man that can't do better than that ain't no better than me. I've got a dorg, here, too, that's some guns of a dorg. Nicodemus ain't very shrewd, but a dorg, Nicodemus is. Whether it's a two-legged or a four-legged critter, he's the dorg. I'm a talkin' 'bout you, Nick."

The dog gave his usual answer, barking and capering about the horse's heels.

"You're two to two then," said the scout, "and a good nose and a sure eye goes for something. But I'm afraid you've a hard row to hoe."

"I've got more than that," said Pete.

"What is it, then?" asked the scout.

"I've got a pard that's wuth three like me. I've got Bill Grubb."

The scout laughed, then struck his hand in Pete's.

"I'm your boss, Pete," he said. "I don't love the colonel."

For mile after mile the two comrades journeyed on, the strong, experienced scout, and the slight, earnest lad. For day after day they pursued their route through beautiful but monotonous scenery. Their nights were passed at the adobe dwellings of daring settlers—half fort, half habitation; or were spent in the mild air of the open prairie.

Their meals were made of the diminishing contents of Pete's knapsack, or from fresh game shot in the day's journey. Nicodemus was alert at stirring up provender for the quick rifle of his master. The scout forebore to use his weapon, leaving the boy every chance to improve in skill.

The valleys of the Big and Little Blue and of the Sandy were passed. The borders of Kansas were crossed and Nebraska entered. At length they entered the wide valley of the Platte, and the broad, shallow river, up which for many miles their route was to lay, was spread before them.

The rich soil of the prairies had now changed to a sandy earth, covered with thin, sparse grass. They were at last on the true plains, the "Great American Desert" of old geographers.

Leaving Fort Kearney in their rear, they struck out along the Platte. Days of monotonous journeying succeeded, over the thinly-clad soil and in sight of the sand-hills of this important river.

Pete was daily growing more versed in frontier life and border duty, by the interesting tales, with which the scout beguiled the way, and the useful instruction which this experienced companion gave him.

They had now reached the buffalo country, and the northward trail of these giant animals were visible everywhere around them, but Pete strained his eager eyes in vain against the horizon for a sight of one of these huge creatures. He was anxious to draw a bead on larger game than he had yet essayed.

These glances at length brought him other objects than those he looked for. White, moving objects were visible against the horizon.

The mirage of the plains lifted them up and gave them the strangest shapes.

"There's water ahead there, sure enough," cried Pete. "It's a lake, or a sea; and ships on it too."

It's a dangerous lake for the man who is thirsty, and deceitful ships for the man who would sail," replied the scout. "That's the mirage, boy. I've seen it make the queerest things out of a sand-hill or buffalo, and miles of water out of a green level. It's very like to cheat young eyes, but I've been there too often."

"And that's not water?" asked Pete in surprise.

"Not a bit of it. Nor are those ships."

"What are they, then?"

"They are the canvas covers of Joe English's wagons. We'll fetch up with them before dark."

"And if I git Minnie Ellis under my eyes ag'in I'll bet two cows I'll fling the kurnel, let alone the smooth devil that's backin' him up," cried Pete, joyfully.

The scout was right. The brisk-stepping horses soon brought the wagons into easy view. An hour before sundown the two travelers rode into the train.

This advent created a considerable confusion in the long train, that seemed to stretch for a quarter-mile along the road.

It was an unexpected break in the monotony of a long journey, and the teamsters crowded round the travelers, asking a hundred questions.

Many of them knew Bill Grubb, and greetings resounded on all sides. Past the white-topped wagons, heavily laden with goods, and drawn each by a string of mules, Bill and the boy rode on.

Near the head of the train walked a stalwart, roughly-dressed man, brandishing a long whip in his hand, while a brace of pistols in his belt proved him ready for more perilous work than driving mules.

"Joe English!" cried the scout, holding out his hand.

"Bill Grubb, or I'm a sinner!" roared the leader. "Where away, Bill! Jump off your horse! Don't know anybody I keer to see more than you. We're going to camp in a mile more. You've got to spend the night with us."

"Can't say," replied Bill, as he sprang from his horse. "Friend of mine here that's looking for somebody in your train."

"Who? This pullet?" asked Joe, roughly.

"What do you want, little one? Is it a man, woman or mule? Let's hear from you."

"It ain't neither," said Pete.

"What then? That's all we've got here."

"You're too rough-spoken, Joe. That's my friend, I told you. You ought to know what that means. It is a little gal he's after."

"Ain't got none," growled Joe.

"What?" cried Pete, with a sinking at the heart. "Don't want to say that you ain't got a little yaller-haired gal, that they call Minnie Ellis, with you?"

"Ain't got none," repeated Joe.

"Where is she, then?" asked Bill. "She left Independence in your train."

"You're right there, Bill," was the answer. "I'm bound for Santa Fe, you know. They were for California. There was ten two-hoss light wagons of them. My mules was a bit too slow, so they struck ahead on the trail. Lit out at daybreak this morning. Drove light. Reckon they're ten or fifteen mile ahead."

"And the yaller-hair with them?" asked Pete.

"Reckon so, if the Injuns ain't gobbled them all."

"I heered something of trouble with the Injuns, Joe," said the scout. "Are they getting cantankerous?"

"Mighty uneasy, now, I tell you."

"Who's with the California wagons?"

"Tom Wilson."

"Tom, eh? That's clever. He'll bring them through, or hurt himself trying. Guess we'll take supper and spend the night with you, Joe. Got to overhaul them wagons, though."

"What's up? Anything loose?"

"Don't know. Feared there mought be. Jump off, Pete. Our hosses are near fagged out. Give them a bite of buffalo grass, and a night's sleep, and they're good for forty miles to-morrow."

Within an hour the wagons were drawn up in a circle, to serve as protection against a possible Indian attack, the stock turned out upon the succulent grass of the plains, and the men at their frugal supper.

We will not detail the camp-fire songs and stories that followed, and that kept off slumber till late in the night.

The next morning dawned bright and mild. The brisk, clear, soft atmosphere of the plains invigorated the travelers as much as their plentiful breakfast. With many a loud farewell to the train hands, they rode on, Nicodemus barking good-by to the canine acquaintances he had made during the night.

The freshened horses stepped out rapidly, and the slow train was ere long dropped below the horizon.

"There's buffalo," said Bill, pointing to the southward. It was now near noon.

A dozen dark forms were dimly visible against the horizon.

"By blue blazes!" cried Pete, rising in his saddle with enthusiasm. "Let's go for them!"

"We're on another lay now," said Bill, quietly. "If I ain't mistaken there will be wuss game than buffalo to shoot at before to-morrow."

"What do you mean?" asked Pete. "Nicodemus has got a new scent in his snout. Jist look at the dorg. What's afoot?"

"Injuns," was the sententious reply.

Pete was silent in the intensity of his emotions. With eyes fixed on the ground he strove to read the signs by which his companion had traced the passage of the savage dwellers of the plains.

Nothing was visible to his eyes but the trail, with scant blades of grass between the wheel and hoof-marks. At one side the trail lay the skeleton of an ox. But everywhere along their journey such bleaching bones had been seen.

The scout looked keenly to see how Pete would take this startling announcement.

He was pleased with the earnest and fearless look of the boy, and the silent compression of his lips.

"Don't see it," was Pete's remark, at length. "They crossed the trail," said Bill. "I saw the hoof-marks of their ponies, plain, back there. Ride a bit out to the left."

Pete obeyed. About a hundred yards out from the trail his eye caught that which sent the blood pulsing in quick waves through his veins.

It was the tracks of a troop of unshod horses, faintly impressed upon the sandy soil.

"Here they go, due west," cried Pete.

"Plum after our California friends," replied Bill. "No use to follow their trail. We must let out on the emigrant track."

Rejoining him, Pete gave reins and heels to his horse, and the two strong animals moved on at a rattling pace.

With hardly a word they rode mile after mile and hour after hour. Noon had long passed, evening was approaching, yet the horizon ahead was still the same unbroken line.

"Fifteen or twenty miles' start ain't easy

picked up," said Bill, through his teeth. "The Injuns will strike for them to-night, and we must ride on till we fetch them."

The sun moved on to its setting, going down behind a long straight line several miles ahead.

"Water there," said Bill. "Trees don't grow here except along a stream."

"There are trees, sure enough," said Pete.

"And the train won't go far from them," said Bill. "Got to camp near water in these dry diggin's. Bet the Injuns are somewhere in that bit of woods."

The night had fallen, the twilight passed, when they reached the tree-lined stream. The moon was just tinging the east, but darkness yet lay on the plain.

The forest shed a dense gloom, into which they rode slowly.

"Steady now and keeful, Pete," whispered Bill. "We've got white men and Injuns both to look out for."

He had hardly spoken when a shrill yell broke on the air, seemingly a quarter-mile distant. It was followed by loud reports of firearms.

"Steady, Pete," repeated Bill. "There's a desperate row ahead. The Injuns have broke in early. Feared of the moon, I judge."

Pete trembled with eagerness as he held in his horse at the whispered suggestions of his companion.

They moved forward slowly, soon crossing the shallow stream, and reaching the edge of the woodland.

The firing and shouting ahead redoubled. Cries of white men mingled with the Indian yells. Rifles cracked incessantly. The train had evidently escaped being surprised.

"We'd best make a break on them, Pete," said Bill. "They will think it's reinforcements. Injuns can't stand a surprise."

"Look at Nicodemus," said Pete.

The faintly-visible dog was moving down the edge of the woods, his nose to the ground.

"That's only somebody been in after water," said Bill. "Let's follow. It will lead to the camp."

Twenty yards, slowly traversed, and the flashes of rifles became visible, lighting up the dark forms of the combatants.

Suddenly a shadowy object emerged from the darkness, rapidly approaching the wood. Behind it moved a second, which a rifle-flash revealed as an Indian, with upraised hatchet.

The same flash enabled Pete to take quick aim with his pistol. A sharp report followed, and the arm of the savage fell dangling to his side.

The form in advance dropped something which it held, and sprang for the shadows of the trees.

Bill urged his horse at full speed upon the wounded savage, and Pete was about to follow when he saw the dog run up to the fallen object, and caper round it, with a glad bark.

A faint cry, in a familiar childish voice, met his ear at the same instant.

Pete fell, rather than sprang, from his horse, and just as the heavy horse of Bill Grubb rode down the savage, he lifted in his arms the fallen object, around which Nicodemus was still capering.

It was, indeed, a human form, and as he raised it from the ground, a flash lit up the well-remembered face of Minnie Ellis, her eyes looking into his with a glad look of recognition, her arms meeting with a choking clasp round his neck.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 355.)

## The Longest Way Round.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

TOM REED was at work in the hay-field, that eventful afternoon, little dreaming what would happen before night.

"I say, Tom!" called out a voice from the road, as Tom paused to wipe his face, having reached the end of a swath.

Tom looked around.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said, as he perceived a young man leaning over the fence.

"What's up now, Billy?"

For he saw by Billy Wilson's face that he had something to communicate. Billy was one of those people you are sure to find in every country place, who know everybody's business, and are always retelling gossip, and keeping things "stirred up," as the saying goes.

"Wall, you see, now," began Billy, with a little apologetic cough, as if he appreciated the delicate ground he must venture upon, "I don't know 's I orter say anything, but then ag'in, mebbe it'll be doin' you a sort o' favor to not keep still."

"Very likely," answered Tom.

"Wall, you see, that Rod Terrill's got back," announced Billy.

"Is that so?" exclaimed Tom, now beginning to be interested in earnest. "When did he come?"

"This mornin'," answered Billy, delighted at his success. "An' he's goin' up to Blake's this afternoon."

"How do you know that?" asked Tom.

"Heard him say so," answered Billy. "Heard him tell the clerk so, down to the store. You know they're awful intimate."

"Yes," answered Tom. "What else did he tell him?" For he saw by Billy's face that he had something more to tell, which he evidently considered of vast importance.

"Wall, I heered him say 's how he'd come up a-purpose to come to some understandin' with Susie Blake," answered Billy, with a sly twinkle in his eyes.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes; an' he said he'd come up on a week-day, so's he could git the start of you," went on Billy, who began to feel of as much importance as if he was a bulletin-board. "He said he knew you didn't go there only Sundays, an' he'd got sick o' hangin' round there, 'bout knowin' whether 'twas goin' to amount to anything, an' he'd come up to settle it with Susie, one way or 'other.







## COASTING WITH THE GIRLS.

BY MARCO O. ROLFE.

Of all the pleasures in this life,  
The one that leads the rest—  
One that combines the best of all,  
And which I love the best—  
Is coasting on a winter night,  
My brain so madly whirling,  
When on a lovely, moonlit eve  
I'm coasting with the girls!

The snow was brightly glistening,  
And flying from the sled—  
I sat behind and guided it,  
While Susie sat ahead;  
And as we glided down the hill,  
She laughed and shook her curls—  
And then I thought how nice it was,  
This coasting with the girls!

Some way her hand slid into mine,  
Just how, I cannot tell;  
And then, my arm got round her waist,  
(A mystery as well)  
And then, I believe, I stole a kiss  
From gleesome Susie Seales,  
And thought how very pleasant 'twas—  
This coasting with the girls!

I think I quite forgot the sled,  
And where it ought to go;  
For when I got my senses back—  
(And they came pretty slow)  
I found that I was in the night,  
And so was Susie Seales,  
Who asked me, anxiously, if I liked  
Such coasting with the girls!

I answered "Yes," and lifted her  
Out of her bed of snow,  
She asked me, when I set her down:  
"What made you hold me so?"  
I'm sure, Phil, you were very long  
In smoothing out my curls!  
I told her that 'twas over thus—  
When coasting with the girls!

Of all the pleasures of my life,  
The one that I loved best—  
What ever in my mind I dwell  
Far brighter than the rest—  
Was coasting on a winter night  
With pretty Susie Seales!  
And if you wish such happiness,  
Go coasting with the girls!

## Great Captains.

## BOSCAWEN

The Admiral who Always was Ready.

IN Boscawen the British navy finds one of the brightest exemplars of that dogged devotion to duty which Drake instilled. Afloat or ashore the true Briton answers to the injunction "England expects every man to do his duty" with a sturdy huzza! It was no French *elan* that led the famous Cavalry Charge at Balaklava, when the "noble Six Hundred" rode literally into the jaws of death, but a stern obedience to orders, even though those orders were known to be a mistake. It has been exemplified on land and sea in a hundred fights that a British soldier is a human machine that has no individual will, but moves, unquestioning and unarmoured, as the master directs. Through all grades of her service implicit obedience to a superior is Her Majesty's subjects' first and last law. Indeed, the very expression—"Her Majesty's subjects"—implies as much—every man who serves under the British flag is a subject, a servant, to a system as exacting in its demands for submission and obedience as the inflexible tyranny of the Turk. And the captain who treats a British deck, secure in his authority over every soul on his ship, owes much to Boscawen, who reduced sea discipline to an art, and made the seaman not an automatic man, but a piece of human mechanism that can be trusted, whenever set in motion, until it breaks.

Edward Boscawen, second son of Hugh Lord Viscount Falmouth, was born August 19th, 1711. Being a second son he, of course, was compelled to "shift for himself"—the law of primogeniture giving to the eldest son all the estate. He, therefore, entered the navy at a very early age, but did not, like Nelson, attain a captaincy before his majority. At twenty-one he was first lieutenant of the Hector frigate, and in 1740 was given the captaincy of the 20-gun ship Shoreham, of Admiral Vernon's fleet, bound for the "Spanish Main"—the American coast opposite the West India Islands. Great Britain, being then at war with Spain, was striking at the Spaniards' sea trade and crippling their commerce as the surest means of injury. Vernon's operations along the Gulf coast in 1741 resulted in a fierce sea and land attack on Puerto Bello, or the Isthmus of Darien, in which Boscawen performed brilliant service; and at the siege of Cartagena, which soon followed, he led a body of sailors in an assault on a shore battery of fifteen 24-pounders, over a field exposed to the raking fire of another battery. The tars, cutlass in hand, scaled the fortifications and won the battery. In the attack on the Boca Chica forts Lord Beaulieu being killed, Boscawen succeeded in the command of his fine ship—the Prince Frederick, of 70 guns.

These exploits gave the captain considerable home celebrity. The fleet having returned to England (1742), he was honored by an election to the Commons, from Truro, in Cornwall—the not uncommon method of expressing popular regard for the successful sea or land captain. Boscawen also married the same year, and proposed to "settle down" as a gentleman commoner, but the war with France brought every naval officer to his post. George II. had, by his interference in continental affairs, encouraged the French to the favorite scheme of an "invasion" of England, and in support of "the Pretender's" claim to the crown of England and Scotland, a powerful land and naval force organized for a descent on the English coast. Admirals Rowley, Morris and Warren were on the alert, with all the available English naval force, and so busily employed the French, along their own coasts, as to put them almost wholly on the defense. Boscawen, taking command of the Dreadnought, of 60 guns, met the French frigate Medea in April (1744), and after a brilliant action of nearly two hours, captured the Frenchman, and bore his prize with 800 prisoners into Spithead. It was the first capture from the French that year, and gave Boscawen additional popularity. The commander of the Medea, Captain (afterward Admiral) Hoquart, was destined to suffer the singular humiliation of falling three times into Boscawen's hands in the course of their respective careers.

No signal general engagement in this war with France occurred until 1747, when Admiral Anson's squadron met the French off Cape Finisterre. Boscawen, as Captain of the Namur, of 74 guns, then greatly distinguished himself. Ten French ships-of-war were captured. Boscawen was wounded by a musket ball in the shoulder in his close quarter combat with his antagonist, whose ship he carried, eventually, by boarding.

These services were followed by his promotion to be rear admiral of the blue, and he was also made commander-in-chief of the sea and land forces sent to India. With six ships of the line, five frigates and two thousand troops he sailed for India (Nov., 1747), and appeared before Pondicherry in the hot month of July,

(1748)—two months later than had been designed, having been delayed by an exceedingly stormy passage and detentions to refit. He put his men ashore at once below Pondicherry, and proceeded to its siege, but sickness among the men, unused to such a climate, forced him to retreat to Fort St. David, from whence he had started. The enemy assailed him with fierce fury, but the retreat was admirably conducted. He then dropped down before Madras, which the French had taken in 1744 and strongly fortified. News of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1749, having reached the place as Boscawen approached, the English took peaceful occupancy of the place. The admiral returned to England to find that he had been promoted to be rear admiral of the white.

Boscawen's organizing talent having become conspicuous he was made (1751) one of the Lords of the Board of Admiralty, an elder brother of Trinity House, and was once more returned to the Commons from Truro.

He saw no further active service until 1755, when Admiral Mostyn and himself were dispatched to intercept a powerful French fleet, destined for service against the English colonies in North America. Our own "old French-Indian War" was then about to burst forth—really a struggle for the possession, by France, of all the country west of the Alleghany Mountains, over which the French claimed domain by priority of discovery by Joliet, Father Marquette and La Salle. The English colonists from Virginia and Pennsylvania, overstepping the mountains, began to make surveys and settlements in the Ohio or North-west territory, as well as what is now Western Pennsylvania; whereupon the French planted a line of forts or posts from Niagara to Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh). This occupancy, and the peremptory demand of the Governor of Canada for the "Ohio Company" of trappers and traders to leave all its stations, resulted in the colonists raising troops to expel the French. This precipitated the war. Great Britain, of course, responded to the call of the colonists; their cause was her own; and a force under General Braddock was sent to Virginia to proceed against Fort Duquesne, while Boscawen and Mostyn, as stated, sailed for the mouth of the St. Lawrence, to intercept a fine fleet France had gathered to transport a strong force, under Baron Dieskau, to Canada. Braddock marched to his work only to be killed, and his little army almost destroyed. Boscawen met the French fleet off New Foundland, but so wide was the sea, and so well conducted the fleet, that most of the squadron escaped. The English succeeded in closing in with and capturing two of the French ships-of-war—Hoquart again falling into Boscawen's hands to be borne, once more, to Spithead. For this service he received the thanks of the Commons.

The war in America against the French proceeded from bad to worse. The campaign of 1756 was a disgraceful failure, leaving the French Marquis de Montcalm master of the situation in Northern New York. The campaign of 1757 opened by the advent of Admiral Holbourn with a good fleet to co-operate with Lord Loudon in an expedition against the good earth fortress of Louisbourg, Isle of Cape Breton; but, after numerous delays and enormous expense in gathering the expeditionary force at Halifax, the whole enterprise was abandoned on learning that Louisbourg was too strong for attack.

The English were defeated in Northern New York; Ticonderoga passed into Montcalm's hands and this ended that campaign—humiliating to all Englishmen, and discouraging to the colonies.

The great William Pitt now came into power as director of the British Cabinet, and almost at once all branches of the service felt the change. The navy was put into a state of great efficiency, and a second expedition ordered against Louisbourg, consisting of one hundred and fifty-one ships—vessels-of-war and transports—and fourteen thousand troops. Boscawen, now admiral of the blue, was in chief naval command, and Generals (afterward Lord) Amherst and Wolfe had command of the land forces. This expedition left England in February, 1758, rendezvoused at Halifax, and June 2d was before Louisbourg.

Louisbourg was then garrisoned by 2,500 regulars and 600 provincials, and commanded by the Chevalier de Drucourt—an able and experienced officer. Its splendid harbor was defended, on the water, by five ships-of-the-line, one 50-gun ship and five frigates, while the harbor entrance was further protected by three ships sunk in the channel. This obstruction made entry impossible to Boscawen's vessels; so a landing of the troops and artillery was necessary some distance from the town. This was effected safely under cover of Boscawen's guns, and Wolfe with 2,000 men seized the height called Lighthouse Point. This commanded both the shipping and the town, and brought the whole port under fire. Additional troops, with strong detachments of sailors were detailed to the land work, for a regular "approach" was the only feasible means of overcoming the main fortress. Boscawen was exceedingly active and vigilant, both on shore and on his vessels. He finally attempted the destruction of the ships in the harbor. First he sent in a bomb ketch, which easily passed the obstructions. It was then set on fire, and, borne in by the strong tide, it struck one of the largest of the ships that rode in the direct channel, at anchor. The terrific flame of the burning craft at once fired the great ship, which, in a few moments, was all aflame, giving its crew barely time to escape in the small boats or by swimming. The ship's guns, one after another discharged, sending havoc all around. Soon the magazine was reached, and an explosion followed that shook the very earth, and the far-flying burning timbers and planks fell upon the other ships, firing two of them, and they shared the fate of their consort.

This signal success was quickly followed by Boscawen's second adventure, which was to send in a strong detachment of men, in small boats, to "cut out" one or more of the remaining vessels-of-war. Six hundred volunteers went in at night. They swarmed over the sides of one ship, but she was found to be aground and was immediately set on fire. A second section carried a second ship by boarding and bore her, by towing, triumphantly out of the harbor through the obstructions.

This unexpected loss of the ships, and the menacing condition of the approaches, compelled the Chevalier to propose a conditional surrender. Boscawen and Amherst demanded an unconditional capitulation—terms that the French commander was soon forced to accept; and the noted fortress, with its fine harbor, passed into English occupancy, to be no longer a menace to English commerce with its islands and provinces. The Island Royal, St. John, and their dependencies surrendered, and thus Cape Breton became an English possession. The fruits of the victory were 221 cannon, 18 mortars, an immense amount of ammunition, military stores and general army supplies. The garrisons, crews and troops, amounting to 6,000

men, were taken aboard of the English fleet and borne as prisoners to England, while the French inhabitants were sent to France—poverty-stricken enough with the loss of all their possessions, yet too loyal to France to swear fealty to their conqueror.

This important achievement gave infinite satisfaction to the British Cabinet and served to strengthen Pitt's hands in carrying out his scheme for dispossessing France of all her American possessions—driving her not only from Canada, but from the whole Lake and Mississippi Valley country as well. Boscawen, as a fellow commoner, was voted thanks, and the House was not stinted in its support of the Ministry that had been so wise in its choice of servants.

In the succeeding year (1759), to Boscawen was committed the task of destroying the powerful French fleet commanded by De la Clue. With 14 ships-of-the-line and 7 frigates he sailed for Toulon, where the French were rendezvoused; but, touching at Gibraltar, he learned that De la Clue had passed the straits, so sailed north for his enemy, and found him in Lagos harbor. A general engagement ensued, and after a protracted and sanguinary combat the French Admiral lost five of his twelve ships. He himself was mortally wounded—both his legs being cut off by a cannon shot, when his ship put into port, followed by the remaining vessels of his command.

Boscawen returned to England to receive Parliamentary thanks and a pension of £3,000 per year. He was also sworn in as a member of the Privy Council, and had the additional appointment (1760) and pay of General of the Marines. He was in high favor with Pitt, who relied greatly on his advice and opinion on matters of war. The fleet, to hold the French under surveillance, spent the summer of 1760 in the bay of Dubuison, on the west coast of France. Scarcely prevailed greatly in the fleet; whereupon Boscawen took possession of a small island in the bay, and with his own hands aided in cultivating vegetables for the sick. Though the strictest of strict disciplinarians, he had a tender heart, and never refrained from solicitude for the comfort and well-being of his comrades.

But Boscawen was destined to see no more service. His health broke rapidly during the year, and proceeding to his home, in the fall of 1760, he there died January 10th, 1761. A very beautiful monument, by Rysbrock, rests over his grave in Cornwall, and his name and fame are cherished with pride by all good Britons.

The Red Cross;  
OR,  
The Mystery of Warren-Guilderland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER XVII.

FACE TO FACE AT LAST.

THE day had passed much as other days, the young people keeping together wherever they wandered, as if one spirit animated them; but, toward the evening, Cordelia began to look rather anxiously for an opportunity to get away by herself to keep her appointment with the man who had called himself her mother's first, and therefore her lawful husband. All day long she had been haunted by the idea of this ill-omened father of hers, as her imagination presented him in ever varying characters; sometimes it was the cruelly-wronged avenger whom she shuddered to meet, sometimes the animalized villain, weary with vice and desirous of a new sensation; and then again her mind would fasten upon that clause in his letter in which he spoke of remorse and expiation, and her proud, pure heart then swelled with sympathy, forgetting to condemn. However, with the natural instinct of such a spirit, she had carefully concealed, even from the affectionate eyes of her benefactor, all sign of disquietude, desiring above all things to meet what troubles were in store for her with self-reliance and fortitude.

The Gaylure group, with their attendant intimates, were spending the afternoon in the heart of the pine thicket which nestled at the foot of the mountain behind the "Alhambra." The spicy pine, the unseen ocean, and the radiant spires of the party, had all combined to cheat the sensitive young creature into a brief oblivion of her trouble; Griffith, too, clinging closer to her even than usual, had never been so brilliantly, exuberantly gay, so that, what with the strange beauty of him and the wild, graceful abundance of his hair, he was, in no one's dream how time was passing, until Mr. Gaylure, happening to look at his watch, cried, in jovial astonishment, "Good gracious! ten minutes to six!"

Cordelia and Griffith simultaneously sprang to their feet, and the others looking up at them inquiringly, were shocked to see each charming young face blanched.

"Cor! Griffith! why, what's the matter?" exclaimed sharp-witted Crystal, glancing from one to the other.

"I—I—had almost—excuse me, I must go!" faltered Cordelia, confusedly, and with the sentence unfinished on her lips, she hurried down the mountain path.

"Kool!" cried Griffith, with extraordinary terror in his tones, while his large brown eyes glanced hither and thither with an expression of agonized anxiety.

Everybody sprang to their feet, with a general feeling that something horrible had occurred, or was about to occur. Mr. Gaylure, who had covered Cordelia's flight by murmuring something about sudden indisposition, and that he would follow her, stared at his youthful friend with gradually intensifying attention and comprehension; Adalgisa swept her great superb sleepy orbs over the youth, with his pallid countenance and his hands outstretched after the vanished Cora, and she sent a glance of curious ferocity in that direction, too; but no elucidation of the matter was begun until Thorford's servant, Kool, quiet, deferential, inscrutable in demeanor as usual, stepped from the background where he might have been observed hovering all the afternoon, had been clumsy enough to permit anybody to be aware of his existence—which he never was. This immaculate gentleman's gentleman approached the excited youth with the matter-of-fact air of one who sees nothing whatever to make a fuss about, and quietly drawing his master's arm through his own, said to Mr. Gaylure, respectfully:

"Mr. Thorford must be excused for a short time; he is subject to bleeding of the nose, which is rather hard to stop; he is generally much alarmed when he feels it coming on." And then he spirited him away; and Adalgisa, perceiving that they took the same path as that taken by Cora, set her delicate arched slipper upon a luckless beetle which was skurrying about in search of a hole, and crushed

the gorgeous blue-green coat of him into ruin. A low laugh in her ear sent her lowering eyes to meet the sneering ones of her sister fixed significantly upon her; when she controlled herself with a sudden sort of power, and resumed the slow bedazzlement of the man who had stuck closest to her during the day. Mr. Gaylure then made light of the two abrupt descensions, bade the party think no more of the matter, and gracefully kissing his hand to the ladies, he, too, vanished down the mossy pathway.

Meantime Cordelia was walking swiftly toward the beach, her proud spirit quivering and chafing by turns, as she approached the man whose existence meant crime for Colonel Valrose and dishonor for her mother. She had no idea how she was going to meet him; her shrinking imagination had refused to picture that scene; all she was conscious of as she hurried breathlessly to the trysting-place, was a growing fierce defiance of any claim the man she was about to see might make upon her love or duty, out of the fact of her parentage. Her great heart was full of the tenderest love and pity toward Colonel Valrose; she had exhausted the treasury of filial affection at his feet; she had nothing for her very own father but stern displeasure and harsh judgment.

She reached the end of the forest path where it brought her to a picturesque gap in the line of cliffs; the sea-beach lay before her, wet and glistening, the sea crawling and wrinking quarter of a mile out as it had been twelve hours ago, when she and her adopted sisters came in from their bath; and there, half-way between the sea and cliffs, directly in front of the cave the hotel people had named the Crystal Grotto, stood a man, motionless.

Cordelia paused a moment, her white hands clenching involuntarily, her cheek flushing hotly, then she walked quickly out on the wet sands, her neck lifted, and her fine eyes dark with haughty impulse.

The man stood with his face to the sea, and his arms wrapped in a loose cloak, which, as she approached, she unconsciously remarked as threadbare, and of the fashion of a dozen years past; she noted, too, that his jet-black hair was thickly sprinkled with white, that his head was bowed upon his breast, and that he seemed profoundly oblivious of all around him. She was close by before he heard her light footstep on the sand; and he turned a pair of cavernous, dark, gleaming eyes upon her slowly and abstractedly, making a slight mechanical bow, and looking away again, as if he expected no one.

"Mr. Jonas Kercheval?" said Cordelia, icily. The man started, and fixed his dark eyes upon her with an expression of devouring anxiety.

"Yes, I am Jonas Kercheval," he said, firmly, "and you are my daughter Cordelia." She shrunk within herself as if he had offered her an insult, her eyes flashed and her cheek burned.

"My daughter Cordelia," repeated he, resolutely, though the dark blood rushed in a shamed torrent up under his sensitive skin; "a living monument of my crime, hating and condemning me as only the pure can hate and condemn the lost. Yet you have come to me, you have obeyed my first entreaty, you cannot be heartless!" and he gazed upon her with a hopeless intensity that went to her very heart. So wan, so woebegone, so utterly despairing and humiliated, Cordelia's righteous anger was melting swiftly away, leaving a harrowing pity behind.

"I have another daughter at home," resumed Kercheval in his intense, repressed manner—standing before her with his hat off and his bowed head to the wind, in an attitude painfully humble; "she is an angel; she has sacrificed her whole life to me; by her I know what a young girl can be! Her mother, too—she is as pure in heart, and mind, and life, as you, and, poor things, they love me! they love me!" repeated the man, with a sob of terrible distress; "and they don't know about this. How am I to tell them? That's what I've come to you to teach me. How are they to be told that I, to whom they have looked up all their lives, whom they have lived for, am the destroyer of both mother and daughter?"

He paused in his passionate address with a horror in his look, and an urgency of appeal that thrilled Cordelia with poignant realization of his suffering. She trembled before him as she read the signs of the desperate struggle in this man's soul between passion and principle; the vision of these two beloved, pure-hearted women, whom his crime must destroy sooner or later, flashed into her mind with a throbbing of horrified compassion; her resentment died out in self-reproach, and a pity too deep for words.

She could not but see how far from wishing to condone his great sin this man was; how his conscience had lashed him; how tragically he loved and feared these two good women who were to be the victims of his penitence; and her own trouble and wrath seemed shallow, selfish and cruel beside his greater anguish, so that at length her generous heart swelled too big for silence, and the gracious words burst forth, widely different from those she had thought to annihilate him with.

"Who am I that I should dare to judge you, sir? In view of your misery my own sinks into mere selfish discomfort. I dare not feel angry with you since I see how heavily God has weighted you with his anger. Do not fear my reproaches, Mr. Kercheval; I shall—I can make none."

His wild excitement gradually cooled down as he heard these lowly-spoken but earnest words, and he gazed upon the beautiful girl with pathetic gratitude and humble admiration.

"Ay, that is your mother's gentle soul over again," he said, dreamily; "Madeline Fleming was as sweet a woman as ever breathed—though I would to God I had never seen her! Is she well, my child? And why have you left her?" He asked this with faltering voice and reddening cheek, anticipating the answer.

"By accident," said Cordelia, shrinkingly, "I heard that—you were yet alive—and I left her. I could not endure the daily sight of my mother's degradation."

"Does she know?" whispered Kercheval, after a dreary pause.

"No, I dared not tell her—he never will," said she, with a shudder.

"And Victor—Colonel Valrose," resumed Kercheval, "how has he borne it?"

"It has poisoned his life, just as it has poisoned yours," replied Cordelia; "and I, alas! loving him truly in the belief that he was my very own father, have only been a tormenting memorial of his sin to him, and have grieved and pined all my life under his coldness and aversion."

"God forgive us!" groaned the man, recoiling from the sight of her choking sorrow as she made this explanation.

"So, when Colonel Valrose confessed the truth to me, urged on by the fear of immediate death, for we were traveling among the Arabs, and they were tearing me away to captivity," continued she, "I understood for the first time the mystery of my youth; and I could not re-

turn to them. They think that I am dead, and so I am and must be, to them."

"And you already know the whole story, then?" said Jonas Kercheval, wistfully.

"No, I know nothing but that Colonel Valrose told me—that he was not my father, and that my father was still alive, although my mother did not know it. I shall ask you, sir, to relate the rest."

Kercheval's pale face flushed painfully; it was easy to see how he shrank from the narration, with those pure eyes resting upon him.

She saw his pain, and with a sudden, boundless pity swelling in her heart, put out her hand and clasped his, in an unspoken assurance of sympathy. So the ruined man received her tender consolation into a heart that was bursting, and looked up to heaven with eyes sweetly filled with grateful tears. And, holding her thus, he told her this story of his sin:

"Victor Valrose and I were college friends, and when we left the university we stuck together like two brothers, caring for none on the earth as we cared for each other. Our affection was at length disturbed by the only cause which could overthrow a sentiment so strong and honest. Two women came into our lives. They also were inseparable friends, equally beautiful, wealthy, young and amiable. You know who they were, your mother, Madeline Fleming, and Margaret Duvau. Victor loved Madeline, and I loved Margaret; they too loved us in the same order. By a fatal misapprehension, however, rising out of our excessive care for each other's feelings, and our dread of injuring each other, we were all four at cross-purposes from the first interview until we crowned our ill-starred magnanimity each to his and her friend, by marrying each the one who was not his and her heart's choice, all supposing that this piece of self-sacrifice had secured the other's happiness. Madeline Fleming became my wife, Margaret Duvau was Victor's; and we resided side by side in New York, prosperous, and apparently possessed of the deepest conjugal felicity. In due time we had each a daughter; but by this time the scales had fallen from our eyes. We men had accidentally stumbled upon the miserable truth; we knew that with the purest motives we had wrecked each other's happiness, as well as that of our respective wives, whose gradual pining and happiness had betrayed the deplorable state of their hearts. Stunned by the revelation we fled from each other's faces, fearful now to risk daily intercourse under such circumstances. Victor went to Europe—I bought property in Virginia and went to live on it. Here I had the grief of perceiving that my wife was dying of a broken heart; she had kept up as long as she could see Victor every day, and when he went out of her life the germ of vitality seemed withered. I saw that I could not keep her on earth for my sake—even her infant, you, child, could not infuse enough interest in her life to make her desire to prolong it. For more than a year I fought with the fatal melancholy which was killing poor Madeline, but I knew that she must die. Then I chanced to travel North on business, and met Victor in New York. He too had left his wife in London, while he transacted some business in his own land; and he told me a history that was almost the counterpart of my own. Margaret was pining away, heart-broken; he was convinced that she was dying. We sat in his private room at the hotel, confiding our irretrievable sorrows to each other with all the old brotherhood of our youth, our hearts as full of pity as of grief. Oh, to undo the misery we had wrought each other! Would God we could restore each other the gems we have so madly misappropriated!" Victor groaned, "but nothing but death can set this wrong right. We shall exchange in heaven, I hope."

"It was midnight, and while the words were on his lips the cry of fire rose in the corridors, and the choking smoke filled the room. We opened the door to see that the hotel was in flames. Owing to some unfortunate oversight the doors were kept locked, and there was no egress until many people had perished; Victor and I, however, escaped through the servants' dormitories, and aided the survivors in their escape until a burning wall fell right upon the spot where we had been standing a moment before. As it chanced we had tottered away arm-in-arm, feeling quite overcome with the heat and in sore need of rest. In the confusion it was supposed that we had been crushed under the wall, but, unconscious of this impression, we took refuge in an adjacent hotel for the night. Next morning we read in the morning journals, in the account of the fire, our own names among the list of killed. Then Victor's words recurred to us simultaneously: 'Nothing but death can set this wrong right,' and we looked at each other strangely, the first stirring of a terrible temptation in our souls.

"Then—then—we fell," said Jonas Kercheval, in humbler tones, his shamed face averted; "we let the temptation master our honor and truth; we did not contradict the error in the papers, but remained in obscurity for a few days, until our wives had had time to hear of and mourn our supposed deaths. Then we took up our lives once more, in our own way, as we had wished them to be so long. Victor went to Madeline, and I to Margaret, each with a lie in our mouths. We each spoke of his own rescue from the fire, corroborating the death of the other, and further declared that the shock of the news had caused the death of wife and child. They believed us, poor innocent souls, and each married her true love, in all good faith, believing herself a widow, and her rival dead. And then we fled as far apart as possible, Victor Valrose with Madeline and you going to Russia, I to the Southern cities with Margaret and her daughter Anne; and so each has lived his life with the consciousness of God's curse paralyzing his every effort. We tried to lose each other, and we succeeded for twenty years; then our sin found us out."

Kercheval paused awhile, his head bowed and bared to the frowning heavens; Cordelia, too, hung her head and wept very bitterly and hopelessly. She knew now that Colonel Valrose, whom she had idolized from her earliest consciousness as the personification of all that was chivalrous and strong, along with this unfortunate man, whose subtle resemblance to herself had disarmed her anger and made scorn impossible—had committed deliberate wickedness from motives that were simply selfish; she knew now that the mother who was in her eyes the embodiment of all purity, had lived, and was living now, in the God-accursed happiness of unlawful love—ignorant and innocent of any harm; that other woman, too, that Margaret who was Colonel Valrose's legal wife, was she still unconscious of the infamy this man of her love had consigned her to!

The pair were walking slowly to and fro, not touching each other now, but closely pacing together on the lonely sands, with the red sun glowing on the horizon out of a chaos of flame-lined black clouds, and the cold, darkened sea swashing whitely in gossamer scallops over the wet sand in its returning flow.

Both were very pale and sorrowful, and so absorbed in their own tragedy that neither







The dance broke up about midnight. The guests departed for home, and we for our camp. The next morning we awoke to find it raining. The glories of our Indian summer had vanished as had Jim's dreams of love, and our sport for the season was done.

After a short consultation we concluded to bid adieu to the lakes and prairies of the north-west, and turn our faces southward; and acting upon this conclusion we were soon ready for departure.

Uncle Lige came down to bid us good-by, and as we mounted our vehicle to start he handed me a letter with the request to read it at leisure. We bid him good-by and rolled away. When fairly on the road I opened the letter and read:

— Iowa, Oct. 10, 1875.

DEAR SETH:—Perhaps you have often thought I had forgotten you entirely, but not so. I could never forget the good times we had, under your guidance, two years ago among the Northern lakes.

By the way, four young friends of mine start for Fall Lake and the North soon. I have recommended you to them, and they will doubtless call on you for your services as guide. You can rely upon them, and now all I have to request of you, is that you put them through the severest course of sprouts the limited resources of your country will afford, and oblige.

Yours, very truly,

W. W. J.

"Exactly," said Jim when I had concluded reading, "that night on the lake, that 'surround' by prairie fire and a few other blood-cooling incidents, I suppose, are among 'the resources of the country.' I am sure they have been all that an adventurous heart could wish for."

And we all concurred in his decision—feeling sure that Uncle Lige had fulfilled the request of his friend, W. W. J., to the utmost extent of his power.

THE END.

## DISCIPLINE.

BY JOHN GOSBIE.

My heart knows not why it was once denied  
To sing its sweetest song;  
My soul knows not why doors which now stand  
Wide  
Were closed to it so long;  
Each knows but this, it needed to be tried—  
For suffering makes strong.

## SURE-SHOT SETH, The Boy Rifleman;

OR,

THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED ROB," "DAKOTA DAN," "OLD DAN BACKBAC," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSE QUARTERS INDEED.

VISHNIA waited not to learn whom her rescuers were, but with wild fear, she pushed off from the beach and sped toward the stronghold of her father upon the lake. But, after she had had a few moments for thought, and her mind had become somewhat composed, she felt a pang of regret for having acted so hastily in leaving her unknown friends without a word of thanks, after they had saved her. To remedy this, however, was now too late; and she was to remain in ignorance, for the time being, as to the persons who had befriended her.

Seth and Hoeseah felt in no way aggrieved by the course she had pursued. In fact, it was just what they wanted, for no sooner was Hawk-Eyes free than he gave the alarm that brought a horde of the savages yelling to the water's edge. But, all they found was a comrade lying dead, his head cloven by a tomahawk.

The two scouts at once beat a hasty retreat along the shore back toward their friends, whom they found in a fever of excitement and anxiety. Seth lost no time in communicating to Harris the discovery he had made respecting Maggie.

"Good Lord bless you, boy!" the happy father exclaimed, wringing Seth's hand. "It relieves my heart of an awful load to know that my child lives; but now, another fear rises in my mind—the fear that the madman on that craft may do her violence."

"Rest easy on that point, Mr. Harris," said Seth, "for I assure you no harm can befall her there; for she has for a companion as fair and lovely a girl as the sun ever shone upon. I heard her refuse to give Maggie to the savages to insure her own and her father's safety. No, Maggie is safe; but the mystery surrounding that raft has deeply enlisted my interest."

"Then you don't think the folks on that canoe are crazy, do you, now?" asked Joyful Jim.

"Far from it; for, if the rest are to be judged by that maiden whom Hoeseah tells me is Vishnia, the Maid of the Valley—she who rescued you at Rock Island, then they are superior beings. By keeping in the vicinity of the lake we may be enabled to unravel the mystery. It is true, our assistance may be needed at the Agency; but if by remaining here we can hold a score or two of Indians away from service; so suppose we now seek some safe quarters and rest easy till morning."

"Nuff said," exclaimed old Jim, "for I'm 'bout bumfusticated."

All readily acquiesced in Seth's suggestion when the party at once moved a mile southward and bivouaced on the margin of the Black Woods. Here they passed the night, and with the first streaks of dawn they were astir. Hoeseah brained a deer with his tomahawk, shortly after daylight, which furnished a hearty breakfast and an ample supply of food for the needs of the day.

Regaled by their brief sleep, and their meal of savory venison, the Boy Brigade felt vigorous, and anxious for the trials of excitement to begin.

Hoeseah and young Tricks being deployed as scouts, the party started back toward the lake. They had proceeded but a short distance when firing was heard in advance, and the peculiar war-cry of Le Subtile Wolf warned the Brigade that danger was near.

In a moment every man and boy sought shelter, and the dozen red-skins in pursuit of Hoeseah found themselves in an ambuscade of deadly enemies who were aware. A short, but desperate conflict ensued. The red-skins were routed, and but for the dense shadows of the Black Woods, not a man of them would have escaped.

Fierce and terrible the war-cry of the Boy Brigade was hurled after the foe, and wild and demoniacal came the response from the enemy.

The Brigade pressed on toward the lake, and at length came in sight of it. The first thing that met their view was the floating cabin of old Neptune. Smoke was curling from one of the little chimney-like boxes on the roof. The door opened, and all saw a little female figure, with a vessel in her hand, trip out upon the

porch or platform in front, and dip some water from the lake, then re-enter the building.

"That was the fair Vishnia," said Seth.

"Do in upon the housework," added Joyful Jim, with a strange smile.

"And yonder," said Mr. Harris, "you can see a horde of Indians preparing to embark in canoes from the east shore; and I dare say, they have designs upon the palace of old Neptune. Boys, can't we drive them away?"

"Neptune will defend himself, I'll guarantee," said Justin Gray. "I'll venture the assertion that he's surrounded with torpedoes."

Gaining a point where they could command a full view of the savages, the boys watched their operations with no little interest. And it was soon discovered that, in addition to the four canoes which they had brought to Lake Luster during the night, a huge raft of logs was in course of construction. No less than a dozen logs were in the water already, lying at right-angles with the shore, and about three feet apart. Across the ends of these, a long pine stick of timber was placed and firmly lashed to each cross-piece. Another log, but smaller in size, was lashed across the other ends of the under logs, and then the raft seemed to have been completed. Between every two logs, two savages took their position, their bodies submerged in the water and their heads and shoulders concealed behind the large log lashed across the ends of the others.

It was rather a rude, yet effective raft for the purpose intended, and our friends watched the preparations for the attack upon Neptune with no little fear and doubt.

"If they succeed in getting within easy gunshot of Neptune's raft, I am afraid they will be successful in their attempts," said Sure Shot.

"However, we will walk around that way and perhaps we'll get an opportunity to take the red rascals in the rear."

"And perhaps Niptoon," said old Jim, "will bring another of them double-headed, volcano contraptions to mince the varlets into fish-bait."

"I hope so," said Harris, "but it seems as though the devils were bound to have my poor child."

"Ah, there goes the raft!" exclaimed young Gray.

True enough, the savages remaining on shore had pushed the raft away from the bank, and slowly and heavily the cumbersome affair drifted out, propelled by the feet of those in the water.

"Now, boys," said Seth, "let us hurry around there and do our best for the friends on the lake."

Away they glided like so many shadows, and soon came within range of the Indians watching upon the bank. Without a moment's delay they opened a deadly fire upon them. The savages at once sought shelter; but in such a position as to cover the operations of their friends on the lake.

Harris kept by the side of the fearless young borderman, Sure Shot Seth, and it was with a feeling of the deepest agony that he learned of their inability to prevent the advance of the raft upon the structure that sheltered his child.

The Boy Brigade was now in its element again. Concealed behind trees, logs and bushes, the fearless youths watched with eager, burning eyes for a glimpse of an enemy. They fought the Indians as Indians fight; and as the red-skins were laboring under the excitement of a surprise, they appeared restless and impatient, and kept dodging hither and thither like rats, exposing themselves to view; and whenever the clear report of a rifle, fired by one of the boys, struck through the morning air, a death-yell was sure to follow.

Sure Shot and Harris were where they could command a view of both the Indians' raft and the floating cabin of old Neptune. They saw the latter come out on the porch or platform of his domicile, stoop over and place something in the water, as on the previous night.

"Now look out!" exclaimed Seth; "it's my opinion you'll hear something 'drop.' That man has sent another of his infernal machines to intercept them savages."

A savage around the lake fired at the old man, but his bullet struck the water several rods short of its mark, skimming along the surface and sank near the floating cabin. A derisive laugh rung from the lips of the intended victim.

About this time a canoe containing a number of warriors put out from the northern shore; but they approached the raft in a rather cautious manner, their eyes searching every foot of the crystal depths before them.

Seth and Harris watched the raft closely for some minutes. Slowly and heavily it crept on through the water.

At times it seemed to stand still, and the patience of the watchers became sorely pressed; but at length they saw the log that protected the savages shoot suddenly into the air, followed by a perfect mountain of water.

Then athwart the morning burst a awful, pent-up roar that fairly shook the earth. A perfect maelstrom appeared to engulf raft and savages. The waters of Lake Luster endeavored to leap from their bed, but fell back with a thunderous surge. Wave after wave rolled with a sullen crash against the shore, and recoiled with a rushing, seething roar. Both savages and raft were lost in the rush of waters; but when the water began to calm down, several of the dusky wretches were seen buffeting the waves in desperate attempts to reach the shore. Those that had started out in the canoe with the ostensible purpose of co-operating with the raft, tacked about and beat a hasty retreat.

Old Neptune stood in front of his floating cabin and regarded the whole with remarkable indifference; and as soon as the savages had all disappeared, two female figures issued from the cabin and stood by his side.

An exclamation of joy burst from the lips of Mr. Harris, for he saw that one of them was his own lost child, Maggie. Seth's heart, too, gave a great bound, but he kept back the words of joy and love that rose to his lips.

For a moment the father and lover watched the figures on the cabin porch, but suddenly the crash of rifles that attracted their attention, and when they looked out upon the lake again, the three forms had disappeared inside their defense.

Rendered furious by their defeat upon the lake, the savages massed their forces and turned against their persistent foe, the Boy Brigade. A sharp and vigorous firing was opened, though with what result neither party was enabled to determine, for the shadows of the Black Woods were deep, almost, as a subdued twilight. It soon became evident, however, that the Indians were gradually working in behind the Brigade, with the intention of surrounding it, and Sure Shot Seth, seeing their danger, at once gave the sound for the Brigade to scatter and seek safety in flight.

Instantly, almost, he saw his friends gliding away; and taking the lead, he and Mr. Harris fled also. They started south, but had proceeded only a short distance when, to their surprise and horror, they beheld a dozen sav-

ages coming directly toward them. To their left the woods were now swarming with the foe, apparently intent upon the capture of Sure Shot Seth. Behind, the latter knew, the way was cut off, while the lake on the right completed the circle of danger menacing them.

They stopped and glanced around them.

"What will we do?—where shall we go?" asked Harris.

Seth glanced out upon the lake. A few yards from the shore he beheld a large log—one of the timbers of the savages' raft—floating on the water. Its presence seemed to suggest an idea to the youth, who, requesting his companion to follow, started toward the lake.

"Secure your rifle and swim for that log, Harris," the young rifleman cried, as they approached the shore.

Instantly their weapons were secured, and plunging into the water they swam like beavers for the log in question. The savages, with frightful yells, came rushing toward the shore, and several of them succeeded in getting a shot at the fugitives; but they acted with such haste and excitement that no injury was sustained by the whites.

In a few minutes more the latter had got in behind the log, enough of which was above the water to afford ample protection to their heads from Indian bullets. Still, they were in no way beyond danger. The savages could easily swim out to them, as they were not over a hundred yards from shore, and moving quite slow.

"We must widen the distance between us and the shore, Mr. Harris," Seth said; "lay your hands upon the log, kick against the water, and let us swim and pull the log after us. It's our only salvation."

"But we are between two fires," said Harris.

"Suppose the man on the raft sends one of his infernal machines down upon us?"

"I apprehend no danger from that source. He was standing on his cabin porch when we entered the lake; and I think he will see the situation at once, and knowing we are enemies to the savages, will render us assistance. At any rate, I believe we had better attempt to reach the floating cabin."

"Just as you say, Seth," answered Harris.

They at once set the log in motion by swimming along backward and pulling it after them; and when fully under headway it required but little effort to keep moving.

Seth thrust his head up over the log and saw that not less than three-score of Indians had assembled on the beach; he saw that great excitement prevailed among them; and, at length, he saw a number, stripped to the waist, plunge into the water and swim toward them.

"Now, Harris, we must work," said Seth; "a number of the red demons are swimming rapidly toward us. If we only dare get from behind this log, we could swim as fast as they; but—"

The clear, stinging report of a rifle rung out behind them, cutting short the youth's words. Glancing back over their shoulders they beheld old Neptune standing in front of his cabin with a rifle in his hand. Mr. Harris turned pale, while a look of uneasiness clouded the face of our hero. A shiver ran over the forms of each as they saw the mysterious old man raise his weapon and aim it directly toward them. A puff of smoke was seen, then the report stung through the air.

Our friends both "ducked" their heads, for they heard the bullet whistle close to their ears; but the horrible shriek of agony that went up from a red-skin's lips told whom the object of the old man's vengeance had been.

Seth again ventured to peer over the log toward the shore. He saw one of the warriors who had started after them, struggling in his death throes in the water.

The savages on shore saw the young rifleman raise his head, and almost instantly a shower of bullets converged in a focus about where his face disappeared behind the log. Some of them splattered against the log, some chipped the bark, and others whistled over within two inches of his head. Sure Shot, however, had been enabled to see that the savages swimming after them were not over fifty yards away.

The fugitives doubled their efforts to escape, now that they felt encouraged by the attempt of old Neptune to come to their assistance.

The reports of his rifle now followed each other in such rapid succession that they were convinced he possessed a repeater, but when a double report finally pealed out, Seth turned and glanced toward the cabin to see who this second defender was. To his surprise he beheld the form of the lovely Vishnia, standing by her father's side, calmly reloading a rifle whose barrel glinted in the sunshine like polished silver.

"Ah, friend Harris!" exclaimed Seth, "we have another friend in the old hermit's daughter."

"We need all the friends we can get now, Sure Shot," said Harris, "for I am inclined to think we are in a narrow strait, or will be if the enemy overtake us in this water."

"Yes, we are, by heavens!" cried the young borderman, glancing over their defense, "for here comes two logs, one behind the other, and both parallel with our own; and I dare say, a dozen savages are behind each. If we are overtaken, it will be all day with us."

"Work, men, work for your lives!" came a deep-toned voice from the cabin on the lake—the voice of old Neptune.

"Would to heaven he could get one of his infernal machines down against them logs," said Harris.

"Our log would intercept it," said Seth, "and the red demons know it well enough."

"Yoop! yoop! stiffen yer sinners, boys! Brace up, for here comes ole Joyful Jim to the rescue! Scat, yer red sulphurians, or another volcano will bust in yer midst!"

The fugitives bent their eyes to the left and saw the old trader, Joyful Jim, coming rapidly toward them in a canoe. The Indians had opened fire upon him, with the hope of frightening him back, but all to no purpose, for their bullets fell wide of the mark.

At the same instant, however, a deafening yell came from the northern shore of the lake. Six Indians had embarked in a canoe from that point, and each being provided with a paddle, they bid fair to get between the cabin and our two friends in the water.

Old Jim saw the danger and pulled with all his might for his friends, finally reaching them. He succeeded in getting them aboard, then turned toward the cabin of old Neptune. But, to their surprise and horror, they saw that the Indian canoe was standing directly between.

"Gosh annihilate the lopin devils!" they've squared their festerin' larkasses atwixt us and that cabin, and so we'll have to skin out for other quarters."

He turned and pulled toward the south shore. Seth took up old Jim's gun and opened fire on the savages in the canoe. Firing from the cabin had ceased, and both the old man and his daughter had sought the cover of their domicile.

For some reason or other, the savages in the canoe made no attempt to follow; and as soon

as the latter discovered this, they came to a halt to watch the movements of the enemy.

The red-skins behind the logs soon came up to the canoe. A short conference was held, when all headed for the cabin of old Neptune.

"Now, by the great horned frogs!" exclaimed Jim, "I s'pose you see what's in their mull-let heads. I reckon as what you perceive what 'em rare flowers of Satan's propagation are gorin' to do, don't ye? Great walls of the temples! how I do wish a torpedo 'd bust' under that canoe and spatter 'em red-skins all over the northern sky. Hoot! by jings! they're gorin' to have to fight for the cabin; the old man's opened his battery on the sweet-scented lark-spurs."

True enough, old Neptune had opened a vigorous firing upon the red-skins from loop-holes in the side of his cabin. Two or three of those in the canoe tumbled lifeless in the lake, while the remainder sought safety behind the advancing logs.

"Boys," said Seth, "we must not desert our unknown friends in the cabin."

"No; to be sure we must not," said Jim, turning the canoe.

Seth and Harris' rifles had been rendered useless by their long submersion, but the former took old Jim's rifle and opened a slow, but destructive fire upon the heads behind the moving logs. But the red-skins seemed determined in their efforts to capture the cabin of the old hermit of the lake. They pushed on—they soon came alongside the cabin. Then they swarmed up out of the water upon the platform in front of the door and upon the roof. The blows of tomahawks, the crash of rifles, the yells of vengeance and groans of agony mingled in a horrible din.

Old Jim pressed as close as he dare—so close that he was enabled to use his revolver. The savages, stripped of every garment save their loin-cloths, climbed and wriggled up the steep smooth inclination of the cabin, like huge maggots, then slipping and tumbling back—some dead, some wounded, some unhurt—plunged into the water.

Puffs of smoke burst from the side of the cabin, followed by stunning reports. Streaks of blood ran down the side of the building and stained the crystal waters of the lake. But like so many ravenous wolves upon a helpless, wounded deer, the savages fought for admittance and the blood of the old man within.

But, suddenly, a wild cry of horror burst from every lip, and the savages sprung away from the cabin as if stung by scorpions.

Our three friends saw the cabin of old Neptune reel upon the water like a drunken thing, then to their amazement and horror saw it sink beneath the waves of Lake Luster with its helpless, imprisoned inmates!

## CHAPTER XXV.

THE FACE BENEATH THE WAVES.

A GROAN burst from the lips of Sure Shot Seth and old Jim, while a wail of the most heartrending agony escaped the lips of the settler, Mr. Harris, when they saw the cabin that contained their friends go down in the lake.

"Oh, my poor child! my poor child!" cried the bereaved father, starting up as if to leap in the water.

"May Heaven smite their destroyers with its most terrible vengeance!" moaned Seth, sick at heart.

"Can't we help them?" cried Harris; "can we not?"

"No, Harris," said old Jim, "we can do 'em no good. See, the red demons are 'bout to turn 'rds us. We must flee from, instead of going closer to, the fiends."

True enough; the savages, satisfied of having destroyed the cabin of old Neptune and its inmates, turned toward our three friends in the boat, flushed with their recent victory. A number of them had entered their canoe, while the rest, getting hold of the logs that had afforded them a bulwark in coming over, pushed out for Sure Shot Seth and his friends.

Old Jim dipped the paddle and set the canoe in motion. Seth continued to load and fire upon the red-skins; while Harris, with a look of the deepest agony upon his face, watched the spot where the cabin had gone down, and from whence the waves were still circling outward, and hundreds of bubbles were boiling and surging up.

Every vestige of the cabin had disappeared beneath the lake save the four chimney tops; and of these, but a few inches were visible above the waves. There was no possible hope for the inmates of the cabin; and, sick and sorrowing at heart, Harris turned his back upon the grave of his child.

Old Jim sat silently plying the paddle, a strange smile—half-bitterness, half-joy—resting upon his face. They moved toward the southern shore, pursued by the savages. The latter, however, relinquished their chase as soon as they came in gun-shot of the beach, for the rest of the Boy Brigade was there in sight, ready to cover the landing of their friends.

The red-skins withdrew to the eastern shore, and in a few minutes Lake Luster was deserted of every semblance of life. Even its shores seemed resigned to solitude.

Under cover of a clump of trees the Boy Brigade held a council, their hearts overshadowed by the disaster on the lake.

"Why stay here now?" said Justin Gray, "since we can be of no avail to the inmates of the floating cabin?"

"We owe the dead as well as the livin' a duty," said old Jim, thoughtfully, yet with a strange smile upon his face.

"Yes, it is a duty—a Christian duty we owe the dead to give them a Christian burial," declared Sure Shot Seth.

Mr. Harris bowed his head and wept, too full of grief for utterance.

And so it was decided that they remain by the lake until the bodies could be rescued from their confinement, and interred.

Seth and Harris hastened to put their guns in condition for use, for an attack from the red-skins was momentarily expected. Fortunately, however, they were disappointed. Not a red-skin was seen during the day; but that they were about, and busily engaged in concocting some trap to catch their enemies, the Brigade had not a single doubt; and so never permitted their vigilance to relax for a moment.

To remain inactive, however, was a persecution in itself to the little band of bordermen; and as the hours wore wearily on, propositions for some movement were presented by various persons. All were decided in the negative until Seth announced an adventure that would admit of no discussion: he proposed to go, himself, upon the lake, and examine the situation of the sunken cabin, leaving his friends ashore to cover his movements, should the savages make any demonstration against him.

No one could see any material danger in this, and so the young rifleman at once embarked in the canoe, still in their possession, for the scene of death. He used the paddle with remarkable skill, and sent the craft flying over the water. He was guided toward the right spot by the four square chimney-tops protruding above the water. The surface of the lake

was smooth and tranquil, and shone like polished silver under the oblique rays of the declining sun.

As the youth neared the spot where the craft went down, his heart almost ceased to beat, while a sense of indescribable horror stole over him. He realized more fully the bitterness of his heart's crushed hopes—the sad awakening of love's young dream. Nervous up, however, he paddled softly on toward the four chimneys—now the monument to his sweetheart's watery grave.

He soon came within five feet of the chimneys, when he ceased paddling and permitted his boat to come to a rest. He gazed over the side of his craft into the water. Its liquid depths were clear as crystal. He could see the bottom of the lake, and the lower edge of the sunken cabin. He turned and looked over the other side of his boat. He started back with a cry of horror.

There was a small glass window or skylight in the roof, and at this window, her hands clutched hold of the lower sill, her white, ghastly face uplifted with all the expression of terror that death could stamp thereon, he beheld Maggie Harris, standing erect, rigid and motionless.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

SURE SHOT CAUGHT AT LAST.

"Oh, Heaven!" burst from the youth's lips, as he beheld the face of his dead darling at the window of the sunken cabin. He turned his eyes away, unable to look upon the ghastly scene. But, he could not drive from his mind the ghastly face, the eyes that were staring wide open; the flowing locks of hair; and the look of despair that he had seen at the window.

For a moment or two he sat motionless, paralyzed. A shrill, quivering whistle rung upon his ear. He started—he recognized it as the warning of danger that belonged to the Boy Brigade's code of signals. He glanced around him, and, to his surprise and fear, beheld three canoes, loaded with savages, put out from different points around the lake and moved rapidly toward him. Taking up his paddle he headed toward his friends, while two of the canoes bent their course to cut him off from shore.

This, Seth knew, they would almost accomplish, considering their advantages, were it not for his friends, who would leave nothing undone to cover his retreat. But, scarcely had he considered this self-assuring fact, ere the report of firearms, mingled with yells and shouts, came from the direction in which he was going, telling him that the enemy had attacked the Brigade and that he could look for no succor from that quarter.

What had promised a quiet, uninterrupted visit to the grave of his sweetheart, now threatened to be a dangerous adventure. With no one to keep the Indians back, he could not reach a landing-place before they came in rifle range. He knew by the rapid firing, and the fierce, savage yells in the woods, that his friends were being sorely pressed; and, as he had to depend wholly upon his own exertions for safety, he turned his boat and attempted to escape between the canoe to the south and that to the east of him. He worked as he never worked before. The perspiration poured from his face; the blood leaped in hot currents through his veins; and his nerves seemed strung to nerves of steel. The elastic blade in his hands bent like a bow; the canoe fairly leaped under each powerful stroke, and a white, frothy streak across the lake defined the wake of the boat.

For a while, strong hope of escape encouraged the young rifleman in his almost superhuman efforts; but, in an instant, all was dashed to the earth, the paddle fell from his hands, and he kept half lifeless in the canoe, a stream of hot blood spurting from his nostrils. Nature had been overcome. An artery had been ruptured, and what of life the hemorrhage left, was now in possession of his implacable foe, Hawk-Eyes, the Boy Chief.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 353.)

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## HIGH FLOWN.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

She occupies within my mind  
A place much higher than a kite;  
I love her longer than a rope,  
And stronger than a calcium stick.  
She's tenderer than a freckled cheek,  
And gentler than a froth-dressed lamb;  
Her nose like my allowance—short,  
And she's as pensive as a clam.  
I love her like I love myself,  
As sure as any shot from law;  
Her hair's too curly for a comb—  
Her voice refers me to her pa.  
Her lips like blossoms like the rose;  
As red as tinsel are her cheeks;  
A short-hand man could not describe  
The way they dimple when she speaks.  
In any printing shop in town  
You'd hunt in vain to find her type;  
Put all the world into a sieve  
You'd not sift out a girl so ripe.  
In all dressmaking stores around  
You could not find her pattern, sir;  
She fills the very world to me  
Since I have made so much of her.  
She's charitable unto the poor  
As any poor-house in the State,  
And has as many smiles for all  
As you could pack into a crate.  
Her spirits always are as light  
As any baker's loaf of bread;  
And nothing heavier than a hat  
Can ever rest upon her head.  
I love her harder than boiled eggs,  
And miss her like an evening meal;  
An artist in the plastic line  
Could never picture how I feel.  
Perhaps she hopes I have of her  
Are wider than an untamed goose,  
But if I knew her love was mine  
I'd feel much easier than old shoes.

## A Little Game.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"You understand me, now, Ernestine? You are to have no communication whatever with Mr. Harold Payne, you are not to see him, or hear from him, or write to him—that is your mother's instruction to me, and in order to break off this infatuation between you and him, you have come to spend the winter with me."

Miss Althea Laureton put on her glasses and then peered over the top of them at the pretty girl sitting so comely in the big sunny window; that you never would have thought she had been unfortunate in her love affairs, and sent down into the gloom of winter in the country for the express purpose of administering a wholesome lesson.

A bright-eyed, dimple-cheeked and petite little lady, with a lovely, fresh bloom on her cheeks, and a haughty little scarlet mouth that curled ever so slightly as she listened to Miss Althea; and yet she was severely "crossed in love," and that too, by her own mother, and not because Dr. Payne was not socially and intellectually and morally her equal, but because he had not money enough to give Mrs. Laureton's daughter as handsome a setting as the owner of the jewel demanded.

And, Tunis Van Harten could! Tunis Van Harten, with his money-bags only equaled in their goodly fatness by his disagreeable countenance; with his many disagreeable qualities fully balanced by his stupendous ugliness.

And Mamma Laureton had laid the case very plainly before Ernestine.

"You shall never marry that young, black-mustached doctor with my consent, Ernestine, and I am free to admit that I believe you are foolish enough to do it without, so I shall take good care you do not have the opportunity. I have written to your father's sister, and she has agreed to receive you and take good care of you."

Ernestine had listened with her brave young heart sinking at the dismal prospect, but she was sensible, and she answered cheerfully without manifesting a sign of her real feelings.

"Very well, mamma, I will go to aunt Althea's whenever you wish, but I can assure you I never will give Dr. Payne up."

Every bit of the Laureton stubbornness was in the quiet remark, but the lady would not notice it.

"You will either stay down there until you give him up, or agree to marry my friend Mr. Van Harten."

And on those conditions Ernestine went down into the sere, brown, frozen country, where Miss Althea Laureton was fully prepared and fully competent for the task of playing dragon to the independent, gracious-mannered young girl who had but one fault in the world—that of loving Dr. Payne.

"I am astonished at you, Ernestine," Miss Althea said, this bright, sunny day, when the snow laid on the country roads a deep, packed smoothness, and Ernestine felt more like flying out into the cold, keen air than sitting at her everlasting sewing, for Mrs. Laureton had given express orders that Ernestine should not spoil her hands with housework.

"I am perfectly astonished at you, Ernestine! Harold Payne has nothing in the world beyond his precarious income as a struggling doctor, while Mr. Van Hart—"

"I will not listen to any praises of Mr. Van Harten, or any condemnations of Harry Payne. He is grand and good and noble and gallant and true, and I love him! There!"

And Ernestine's blue eyes flashed as only bright blue eyes can snap, and Miss Althea changed the subject wisely.

"I am going over in the one-horse sleigh to the village this afternoon, and if you wish you may go with me. Perhaps you'll be lonesome here until eight o'clock, with only Bridget in the kitchen."

No, Ernestine would not be lonesome, neither did she wish to go, and so Miss Laureton drove herself in the little old-fashioned sleigh, thinking very seriously of the command she had laid on Bridget, that no gentleman be admitted during her absence, and wondering if the unnatural life Ernestine was leading had anything to do with the loss of color she noticed, and the occasional pain in her side Ernestine sometimes mentioned.

Miss Althea's half uneasy reverie was dissipated by her reaching one of the main points of her destination—the village post-office, where she received her weekly *Examiner*, and, quite to her surprise, a letter addressed in a bold, flaming hand to Ernestine, in her care, also a dirty, mussed-up epistle for herself, if the address, "Miss Althea Laureton," was supposed to mean her.

She put on her glasses deliberately, and looked intently at Ernestine's letter, as though it would have been a great comfort to have known what there was in it. But, for all her harnessing, she was honorable, and, instead of opening and reading the letter, as she might have so easily done, she tore it in pieces, then threw it in the stove in the post-office building.

"You don't come any game over me, Doctor Payne!" she said, apostrophizing the correctly-supposed author of the letter, and she smiled grimly to think what a conscientious dragon she was, in the performance of her duty to her poor deceased brother's misguided daughter.

Then, with a woman's natural curiosity, she set about reading the other letter—no easy task, for the handwriting was a marvel of difficulty to decipher, not to mention the decidedly original spelling of the words.

But she made it out, and learned from it that the writer, who signed no name, sympathized with her—Miss Althea—in the matter of her niece, and, as a specimen of their charity and sympathy, begged of Miss Althea to drive as fast as she could to a certain place indicated, where she would ascertain for herself, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that her niece's "young man" was not what he should be. And knowing the truth, the letter delicately insinuated, Miss Althea would be the better able to protect the young lady's interests, and be personally able to convince her of her lover's worthlessness.

So—Miss Althea decided to follow the advice of the letter, with a mental thanksgiving that she could at last be of real, practical service in the crusade against Doctor Payne.

"Whoever wrote it must be more of a friend than they're willing to admit," she thought, as Sorrel trotted along in the late afternoon toward the place indicated by the anonymous letter.

Her thoughts ran eagerly on, far faster than the old horse's feet, and by the time Miss Althea thought she should be pretty near to something, she was cold, and tired, and not a little cross; and freezing, and very stiff from sitting so long, and most undeniably ill-humored, when she suddenly discovered that the road she had taken according to the strictest directions of the letter, instead of bringing her to some retired den of iniquity, where thieves and gamblers congregated, or perhaps to a house where she would find out that Doctor Payne was already a married man, or something equally positive—instead of any of these, the road came to a sudden stop by leading into a wide-reaching, barren, snow-covered meadow, with not a chimney or a wall as far as she could see!

Miss Althea stood up in the bottom of the sleigh, gazing wrathfully around.

"I've been sold—I—Miss Laureton, of Clayville, regularly sold! And here I am, fifteen miles from home, and the sun going down, and a bitter cold frost in the air! Miss Ernestine, you shall pay for this!"

Although what Ernestine had to do with it, she could not have told, only that the girl was the only safety valve available.

It was long after eight o'clock—long after nine, when Miss Althea walked into her sitting-room, numb and purple with the intense cold. It was charmingly warm and brilliantly lighted, and wore an air of delightful home comfort—but Ernestine was not sitting in the cushioned rocking chair that was drawn up to the fire.

"Bridget!" Miss Althea shouted, "has Ernestine gone to bed?"

Bridget answered in a wide-eyed surprise: "Gone to bed, me! And wasn't it yourself that sent after her to meet yees down to the post-office in the village?"

"Sent after her?"

Miss Althea stared and grew hot and cold. Bridget returned the look with interest.

"Sent after her?" she re-echoed. "Who came for her?" Her voice was faint, her face pale, and gloomy.

"Indeed, and I never seen him afore, on'y it was a proper foine young felly with the blackest eyes and mustache that iver I seed!"

Miss Althea gasped.

"Black eyes and black mustache! Good Lord, Bridget, what a fool you've been—here was the very one we've been guarding her from! And to think—in my very soul I believe it was a job between them to get me out of the way!"

Bridget's eyes were like saucers.

"Faix, an' was I to know a man what I'd niver lay'd my eyes on afore? Indade and how c'd I tell, and he a-ringin' at the durbell as proper, and a-dhivin' of a message from yees, biddin' Miss Althea to meet yees at warner on pertickler business at the post-office?"

Miss Althea rocked and groaned and then fell in a limber mass against the chair cushion.

"To think he's taken her from under my very nose! Bridget Maloney—you shall answer for this!"

And when, several weeks afterward, Dr. and Mrs. Payne called on aunt Althea, assuring her she might conscientiously forgive them, since Mrs. Laureton, *mere*, had done so, Ernestine told Bridget she should never want friends while she and the doctor lived.

And Ernestine is happy as a bird—while if any one happens to mention anonymous letters she and her handsome doctor look suspiciously innocent and ignorant of such disgraceful proceedings.

## An Engineer's Story.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

"Are you all right, ma'am?"

"All right, thank you."

The engineer jerked a cord that let loose a horrible, long, shrill whistle, and moved a great steel bar at my side that I watched with awful suspicions of oil, and heartrending fears regarding my new peacock-blue silk. The grimy-faced fireman gave a few vicious tugs at the bell, pulled open the door of the furnace by a massive chain, and with much clatter poked at the fire within until it showered out a cloud of blazing smoke, that he could not, clashed the door shut, and we were off. And all this happened in a mere trifle of the time it has taken to tell it.

I looked at my watch. It was seven o'clock and broad daylight, for the time was summer. Seven o'clock! and the wedding was at eight, and we had fifty miles to go! I suppose my face had an anxious look when I turned it toward the engineer, meeting his full gaze.

"Oh! I'll get you there in time, ma'am; I'm bound to. We'll make the fifty miles in fifty minutes, and weddin's mostly never are on time. And the superintendent telegraphed you'd be there."

"Did he? That was nice of cousin John. I was so flurried I never thought of that." And I felt relieved, as I judiciously gave another tuck to my silken robes under my linen duster. As I did so, I received a dreadful jar that caused me to drop them again, and materially decreased my mental temperature. A realization was forced upon me of the frightful way in which we were dashing over the rails; while, at the same time, the atmosphere within the engine grew so rapidly hotter and hotter that I caught myself doubting if the fireman and engineer were ever afraid to die—no matter how orthodoxly they had been brought up.

With desperate efforts I learned to maintain my center of gravity, though, as I gathered together again my breath and my robes, I clasped despairingly the window ledge beside my high seat. Presently, as one will grow accustomed to any situation, I became quite used to the frantic bounds of our madly-speeding conveyance, and even commenced to take some interest in my material surroundings. But to me, all unused to this novel and frightful way of traveling, the fleeting landscapes, and flying villages, were only productive of a decidedly unpleasant, dizzy sensation. As a purely sanitary measure, I was forced to make an attempt to obtain amusement within the engine. I fell back, for comfort, upon my sex's unfailing source of occupation, my tongue.

We are traveling at a terrible rate," said I to the engineer.

He saw that I had spoken, but as I had not pitched my voice nearly loud enough for him to distinguish the words, called out:

"What is it, ma'am?"

"We're traveling with terrible rapidity," I almost screamed, articulating each word as if I were teaching a class in phonetics. "Are you sure there is no danger?"

"Oh, no! none whatever, ma'am; this is a perfect engine."

"I suppose you are accustomed to it," I ventured, still trying to carry on the conversation, notwithstanding the disadvantage under which I was laboring. "Cousin John said you were one of the oldest engineers on the road."

"Yes," he said, brightening up, "I was an engineer here when the superintendent was only a little boy, the son of a conductor; but you see we don't often have a call to travel like this, and I'm not likely to forget the first time I did it."

I saw by his looks that the reminiscence was a pleasant one, and to encourage him to converse, asked: "Why did something happen?"

"Well, I reckon something did happen!" he said, emphatically, getting as near to me as the consistent performance of his duties would allow, evidently preparing for quite a talk.

"I would like to hear about it," I shouted, sympathetically.

"Well, ma'am, you see I was a young fellow, then, only just promoted to be an engineer; and there came an awful storm that lasted about three days. Everything went right along the road until the third day; when, late in the afternoon, they commenced to get worried in the office, because something was the matter with the wires. They couldn't get no messages; and an Eastern train, that had been due for half an hour, had not been heard from along our part of the line. It stormed awful just as if it never meant to stop! The rain came down in bucketsful, and the wind was blowing a roar, and it was raining so hard that the thunder and lightning that commenced about dark."

"Well, I didn't run no regular train yet. I was kinder kept around the yard, shifting cars and the like, and going out on specials; and as I was loafin' in my engine, I thought that I blessed my stars I hadn't to be on the road such a night, who should jump up in my box but the old superintendent himself, and a dreadful grave-face he had, too."

"Abe," says he, "do you think you could take engine number four, the Lightning, and carry me down to Coon's Creek faster than you ever went before in your life?"

"I reckon I could, sir," says I. I felt kinder skeerish, but Jim Meigs, who always ran the Eastern express, had been a-tesin' me only that mornin', called me a "play engineer," and said I'd be frightened to death if I had to do any real work. Here's a chance, thought I, to show him. So I straightened up, and said more lively than ever, "I reckon I could, sir."

"Very well," said he; "call Morris—Morris was the fireman—and I'll be with you in two minutes."

"Well, sir," said my companion, getting so excited that he quite forgot his passenger was of the sex that could weep new peacock silks. "In five minutes was just a-flyin' along that road like mad, with the storm howlin' all around us and the rain fairly sizzlin' down on the engine."

"Morris and I kept a sharp look-out, with our hearts layin' pretty near our throats; for we wasn't very certain as to what minute we might come to some unlucky end. You see, the road wasn't no double-tracker, all the way, in those days; and often we had gone about twenty miles, and passed two out-trains waitin' at stations for the delayed Eastern; we thought we might just as likely as not telescope into it anywhere along the track just a-flyin' along that wasn't a very cheerful thought with us travelin' at the rate of nearly a mile a minut."

"The old superintendent, he said never a word; but he couldn't even smoke the segars he lighted, only kept bitin' the ends off and pitchin' 'em away. And when we got down into Coon's county, in the long stretches of wood—we'll soon be a-passin' through 'em, ma'am—the wind was just a-tearin' at the trees, and made the limbs and shades beat across the track, that even with the light of the engine we couldn't always make out what they was; and a dozen times or so, Morris and I looked at each other, a sort of good-by."

"But, at last we flew out of the shades, almost down by Coon's Creek. You see it was a dangerous sort of a place; first the creek, with a narrow bridge—and one track across it, and then a high bit of land through which the road had been cut with a sudden curve. Well, we was just a-sweepin' near enough to see that the creek was awfully swollen when Morris gave a scream."

"Good God!" says he, "there's a woman on the bridge!"

"I looked, and sure enough there she was; takin' careful steps from one plank to another, with the river a-rushin' beneath her and a cloud of blazin' smoke, that she couldn't 'a' heard the angel Gabriel's horn itself; for the old superintendent was a-pullin' at the whistle; but she went right on, takin' those careful steps across the planks!"

"Abe," says the superintendent, "stop the engine! for Heaven's sake, stop the engine!"

"I can't, sir," says I. "It's too late; and just then she saw the light of the engine, turned around, and threw up her arms; and there was bearin' down upon her—though Morris was slowing up the best he could."

"Just then a sudden thought came to me. There wasn't but one chance in ten for the woman's life; and that chance I'd give her, for the sake of the mother and sister I loved at home. I sprung out on the engine and down to the cow-catcher. The bridge, as I said afore, was narrow; and it hadn't so much as a plank of sidin'. I reached my place just in time; another minute and she would have been lost—so young and pretty she was, too! As we came down upon her, she standin' there balanced on one of the logs, I gathered all my strength and flung her into the river."

"Good gracious!" cried I, wrought up to a state of intense excitement by the narrative, "I thought you were going to try to save her!"

"That's just what I'm a-tellin' you," said the engineer; then to the fireman: "Take down your fire well. Yes, that's just what I'm a-tellin' you. You see by the time we got across the bridge we slowed up. 'Now, sir,' says I, to the superintendent, 'I'm a good swimmer. Can I go in after the girl?'"

"Yes," says he, "and, Morris, you take a lantern and go on ahead, along the track; and give me the other, and I'll see if I can help Abe, here, rescue the girl." I just hopped right into Coon's Creek. I knew the current would bring her toward our bank, only a little lower down. And sure enough I found her, and got her out in no time; and, if you'll believe me, the plucky little thing was a-clingin' to an oil-can she had, and as soon as she opened her eyes, called out:

"I'm all right; take the oil, quick! quick!"

"Take the oil for what?" says I, thinkin' she must be somethin' wrong in the head. But just then I saw Morris' lantern come rushing back along the track, like mad; and he a-screamin' to the superintendent, 'There's been a land-slide round in the cut; and the vires are broken, and the rails half-covered with sand and stones!'"

"Yes, that's it," said the girl, "and the express hasn't come yet! And then she closed her eyes as if she had done her duty and left the rest with us. Well, the superintendent sent Morris round the other end of the cut with his lantern, and when the express came along, twenty minutes after, he succeeded in stoppin' her; for, you see, Jim Meigs was a-runnin' her kinder careful like, owin' to the damage done by the storm and her bein' so behindhand. So there wasn't no muss; though likely there'd been a kind of a time if he'd sailed ever so lightly into the cut, or if we had, either. Of course there was a good deal of delay, and I s'pose some of the people grumbled 'cause they didn't get nothin' to eat till next day. But there always will be some onreasonable folks in every crowd."

"And the girl?" asked I, anxiously.

"Oh, she was all right, and folks made no end of a time over her. You see, she kept house for her father in a little cottage the other side of the creek; and he was taken with a pretty severe attack of rheumatism, and sent her to the nearest neighbor, towards Coon's Corners, to get him some liniment; and she discovered the land-slide, and hurried home, and the old man, knowin' the express hadn't gone by, sent her back with oil to build a signal."

"Have you ever seen her since?" I asked, greatly interested.

The fireman grinned, and the engineer smiled at me patronizingly, as he answered:

"Yes, ma'am, I see her mostly every day, now. You see she and I've been married these fifteen years. Ah! here we are at Coon's Creek."

"What!" said I, looking up upon the splendid iron bridge we were crossing. "This is Lynwood river! and we're almost at Lynwood!" I added, with delight.

"Yes, ma'am; but this used to be called Coon's Creek; and Lynwood was Coon's Corners. Here we are; and it's seven minutes of eight, and I guess them's your folks a-waitin'."

"The eyes of the speaker glittered while he talked; the promise of the long-coveted dukedom made his grasping heart beat rapidly. He was a handsome but cunning-looking man of two-and-thirty, a thorough Venetian, but one who was not admitted to the councils of the titled, though the inheritor of a dual crown. He had traduced the State, for which crime, on account of his family connections he had suffered but banishment; but he was again in the Island City, watched by the lynx-eyed spies of State, and scorned by the lofty.

It was night, and the watery thoroughfares of Venice swarmed with gondolas. They flitted hither and thither like fireflies, now in the shadow of some lofty palace, now boldly out into the bewitching starlight.

The two gondolas lying side by side did not attract special attention. No one dreamed that one of the loftiest of the senators was conversing with Falerio Montalfo, the disgraced nobleman. But such was the case. The venerable man whose flowing white beard covered his breast, was the Duke Valva. He was loyal to the State, but grasping and suspicious.

He occupied, with the tainted nobleman, the closely-curtained apartment on the gondola, and it was there that occurred the conversation recorded above. When the twin separated, the old senator retired to his own beautiful craft which was paddled away, and Falerio Montalfo was alone.

"He does not promise like a traitor?" he said to himself. "Give me back my dukedom, and I will make my name respected by the coward souls that heap insults upon me—that make me come forth like a thief in the night to breathe the pure air of my native city. Let me see: for whom am I watching? Ah! yes, for the black gondola. Last night I heard her voice beyond the curtains of its palace; last night I followed it to the steps of her dual home and saw him lift her from the boat and kiss her good-night. It was for you, Vacie Valva, a duchess of this heavenly city, that I betrayed an exile; it was his call that brought the condemnation of the council upon my head. Now he kisses you; now he does as he pleases here, while I—I sink from the sun and am hunted down by spies! But enough! I break the chains; I snap my galling fetters to-night, and the hand of my foe nor the love of Vacie Valva shall longer stand between me and the freedom I have sworn to enjoy!"

The last word had scarcely seemed to possess a sound, when the exile's gondolier parted the curtains and whispered:

"The black gondola, signor. It passes to our right."

The master started and hastened to look out. Sure enough, a long and somber-looking craft was passing lazily to the right. The palace was heavily curtained, and the single gondolier who guided the boat looked like a dark-robed specter in the light of the stars.

"It is the black gondola!" the Venetian exclaimed, with a flashing of his dark eyes. "Pull alongside, Pedrez; but not near enough as to excite suspicion."

The command was obeyed, and the once banished duke heard the confused murmur of voices. The conversation was not distinguishable, but he arrived at the conclusion that the palace of the black gondola was tenanted by two persons. He discovered from the voices that one was Vacie Valva, the old senator's child. Imagination did the rest.

"I must hear them!" he said, impatiently. "Pull closer, Pedrez."

"Nay, signor, the gondolier is watchful. He is pulling away already."

"The fiends!" exclaimed Montalfo. "I can never recover my dukedom in this manner. Does the gondolier drink?"

"I fancy he does, signor."

The exile disappeared for a moment. When he again exhibited himself to his gondolier, his hand extended a bottle of wine.

"Pull closer, Pedrez, and give this to the fellow!" he said. "Do not taste it yourself. I have better for you."

The gondolier took the wine with a merry twinkling of his eyes, and rowed to within a short distance of the black craft.

In the minute that followed the wine exchanged hands, and the gondolier for whom it was intended held the bottle to his lips in a long and solid draught. Montalfo watched him with keen eyes; he saw the dark form sink back, saw the black paddles slip from the nervous hands.

Life had ended for the gondolier; the poisoned wine had done its infernal work!

"Quick, Pedrez!" cried the duke. "Pull closer! They suspect not. I will become their boatman."

The gondolier stared at his master, who jerked his cap from his head and placed it upon his own. The boat shot alongside of the dark craft, and a moment later the transfer had been effected. The dead gondolier lay in the palace of the traitor's boat, while the greatest villain in Venice steered the gondola of those whom he hated.

Pedrez pulled away after the exchange, pulled swiftly off with his deadly cargo; but glanced back now and then at the black gondola with its new gondolier.

Falerio Montalfo sat motionless in the seat which he had usurped; but his ears were open and he heard this:

"I fear this man Montalfo means us harm. He should not have been permitted to return. I must guard against him. To-morrow I will insist upon his second banishment."

Despite his nature, the new gondolier started, his face became deathly pale.

"Rather let him remain!" said a woman's voice. "The spies of state are upon his heels. I do not fear the traitor. If you think that his venom will not strike you, Garcia, do not bother with the Venetian snake."

Then the conversation turned to other subjects, and the black gondola glided over the starlit water, while its gondolier listened to every word that dropped from the lips of those within the palace.

At last he received a command from behind the curtains: "To the palace, Villo."

The traitor turned the prow of the boat and struck out boldly. He displayed the eagerness of vengeance in his strokes, as if he longed to reach a certain point for a dark purpose. He heard Vacie's voice float starward in one of the sweetest of Italian songs; heard her courtly lover applaud, and bit his pale lips all the time.

The shadow of the white-bearded senator's palace did not fall upon the black gondola a moment too soon for the disgraced duke. He hailed the stately old pile of ancient masonry with unconcealed delight, and as he approached the portals, guarded by great stone lions, he drew a shining stiletto ready for use.

Death's awful stillness seemed to hang over the palace, and the shadowed water. Vacie's song was hushed, and the lovers were conversing in whispers. No gondolas were near, which fact told Montalfo that the aged senator had not returned from the secret session of the dreaded council.

"Is the way clear?" asked a voice, and the handsome face of a young Venetian looked from the gondola's palace.

The prisoner answered with a nod, as the prow of the black craft touched the first step, and laid aside the oars.

Then the curtains parted and the inmates of the little structure came forth.

Falerio Montalfo started, when his eyes fell upon the beautiful Venetian girl. He had not seen her for two long years of bitter banishment, and he was surprised to note how womanly and entrancing she had grown.

She glanced at him, but did not discover the deceit which he had practiced, and permitted her escort to lead her toward the marble steps.

Biting his nether lip till it bled, the gondolier stepped aside to give the couple path; but Vacie's flowing sleeve brushed his arm, the wind blew one of her long curls into his face.

It stung like the knout, though it scarcely touched his cheek. It sent a thrill of jealousy and revenge to his treacherous heart.

He sprang forward, stiletto in hand, and, halting upon the gondola's prow, faced the astonished couple.

"The time has come!" he exclaimed, darting a fierce look into the young nobleman's eyes, and the sentence still sounded when the lovers simultaneously ejaculated his name.

"Falerio! the traitor, the traitor of the State!"

"Ay! the traducer of Venice by subornation!" he hissed, as seeing Vacie's escort draw his sword, he hurled his dagger into the water and unsheathed his own slender blade.

The girl released her companion's arm, and the ring of steel spoke the signal of conflict.

Fierce and revengeful was the fighting of the prisoner; but his cooler adversary forced him up the stone steps toward the massive lions.

Vacie remained on the boat watching the combat, pale but hopeful, for she knew that her lover was the best swordsman in the State.

All at